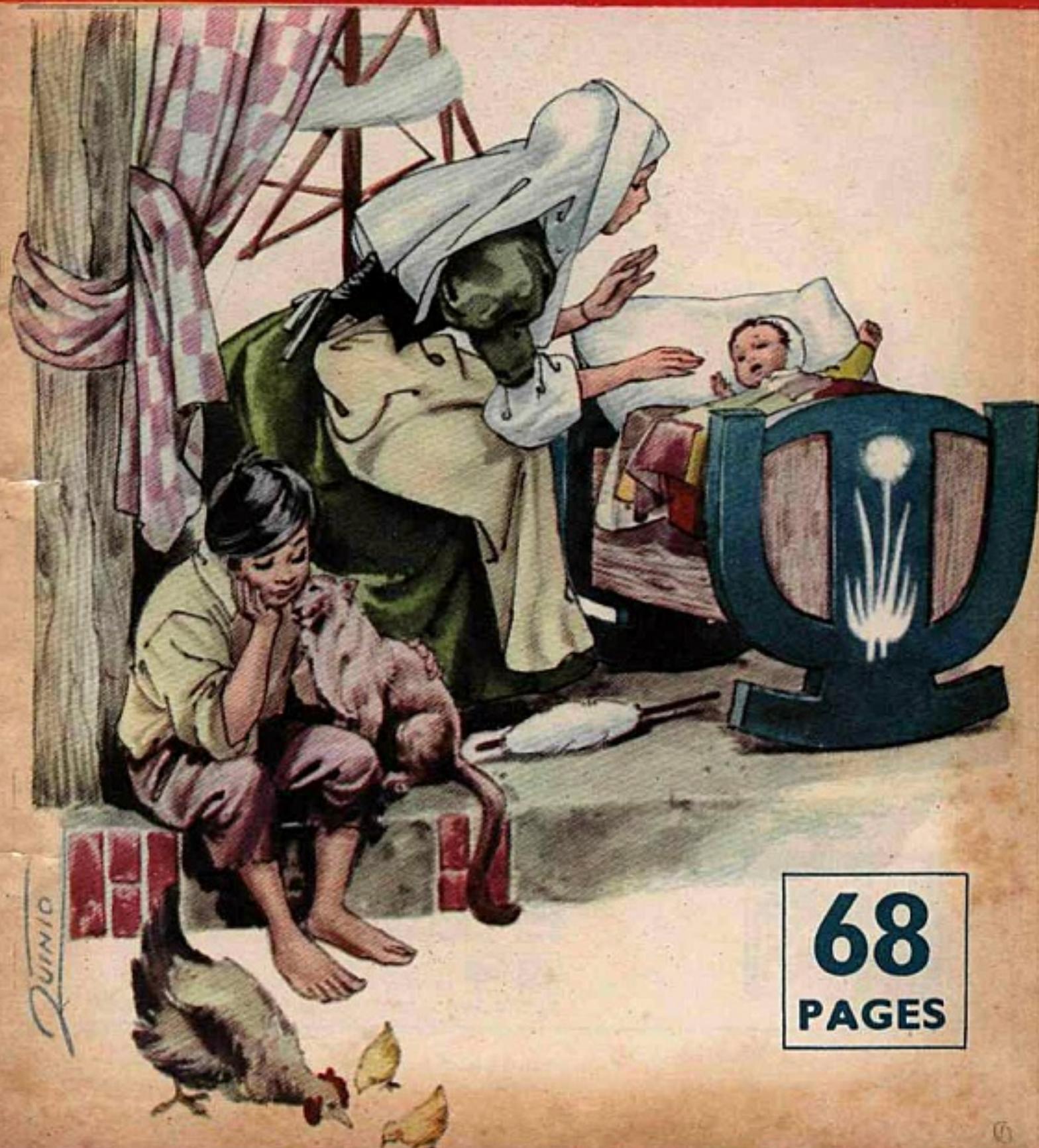


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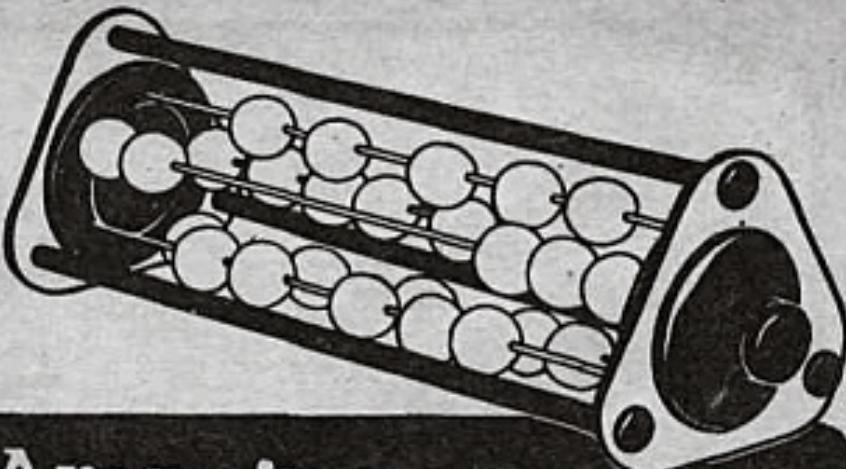
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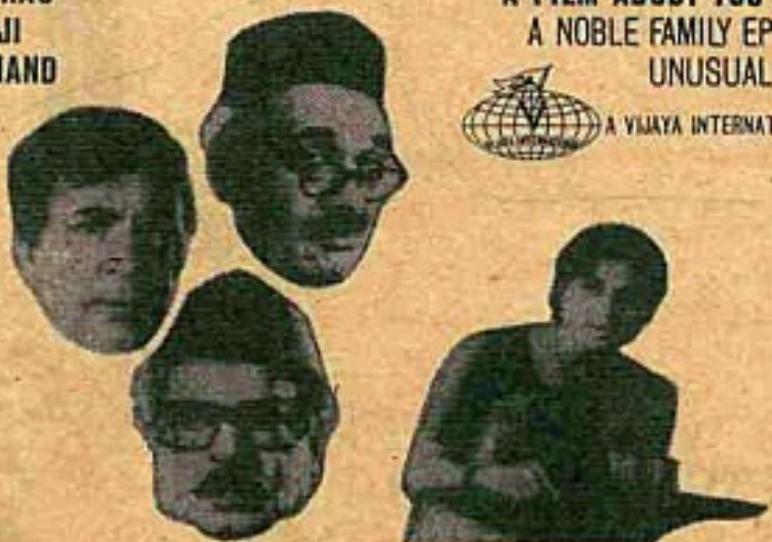
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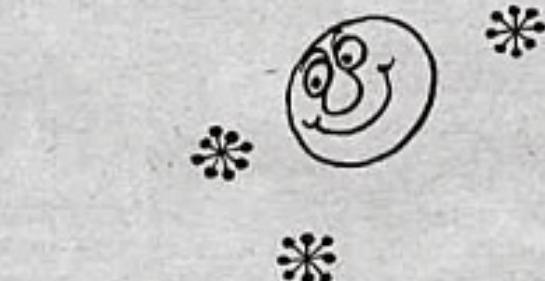
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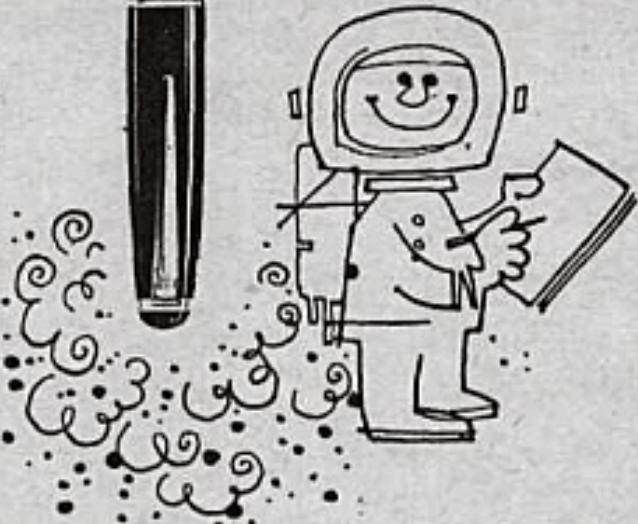
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We hope you will agree that, we have started the New Year, with a really glorious issue. In the centre of the magazine is the first of our Card Index of Knowledge, covering a number of interesting subjects. It is designed so that you can cut out each card and build up a useful reference library.

Naturally, there are quite a number of tip top stories. such as.....

'Breakfast for Anita' - a delightful story from Spain. — Page 12

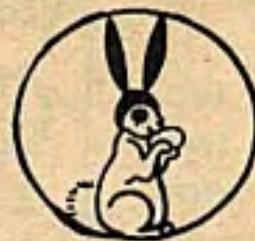
'The Prince and the Peacock' - even the illustrations will make you smile.
— Page 20

'A Game of Chess' - you can work out this sum. — Page 41

'The Magic Cloth' — a story with a good moral. — Page 55

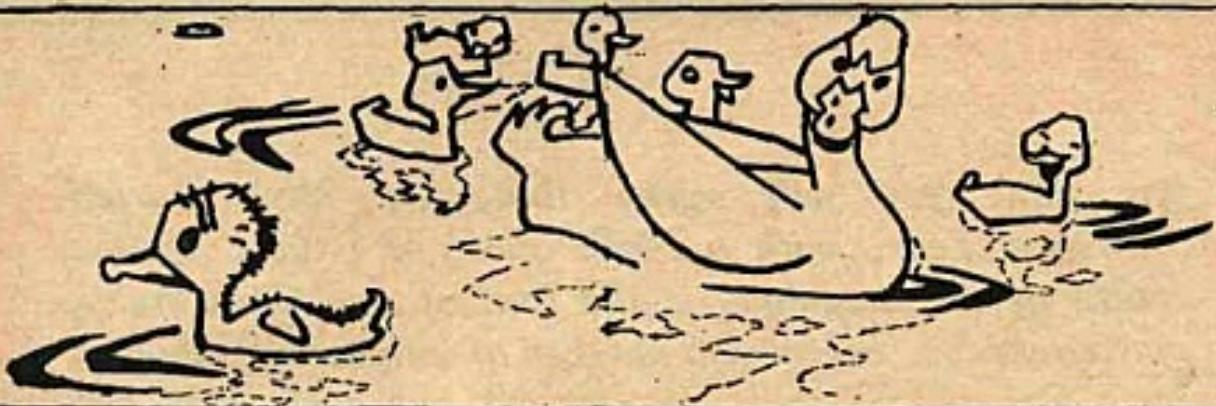
Then, of course, there is Baron Munchausen, Mahabharata, and a lot more stories.

Vol. 1 No. 7



JANUARY 1971

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THE UGLY DUCKLING

From the story by Hans Anderson

It was the drowsy hour of noon. It was so hot, the farm was like an oven. Only the sparrows were twittering in the shade of the neem trees. Everything else was quiet and peaceful. Even the farmer was asleep.

By the side of the pond, a mother-duck, however, was not sleeping. She was busy sitting on her eggs, which should hatch at any moment.

At last she heard tap, tap, tap, inside the shells. The tapping grew louder, and soon four pretty little ducklings came out.

Just as mother-duck was about to get off her nest, she noticed that there was still one egg left.

"Oh well," she sighed. "I will have to wait until this one hatches."

On the pond, all the other ducks and their young were swimming around, enjoying the cool water. But mother-duck was still waiting for that last egg to hatch. "Oh! do hurry up," she kept telling it.



Hours later the egg broke, out emerged the ugliest duckling you ever saw. So brown and ungainly.

The next day mother-duck led her brood into the pond to learn how to swim.

"Quack, quack, quack," she said, asking her little ones to follow her, as she got into the water. In went the four ducklings, followed by the ugly duckling.

The ducklings were soon swimming merrily around, and the ugly duckling was quite an expert. "Never mind his ugliness," said mother-duck to herself. "He can certainly swim."

After the swim the mother-duck took her little ones to show them to her friends.

The big turkey shook her head in disapproval saying, "How ugly this one is."

"But he swims wonderfully well," mother-duck said. Though secretly she was rather ashamed of the ugly duckling.

The other animals in the farm-yard jeered at the ugly duckling, and even his brothers and sisters pecked at him when mother-duck was not looking.

That night the ugly duckling cried himself to sleep. When he awoke, the stars were still shining. So, dreading another day of jeering and pecking, the ugly duckling waddled away

from the farm, along the road to the marshes, and hid himself in the tall reeds.



Bang! bang! bang! The ugly duckling nearly jumped out of his feathers. What was going on? Poking his head out of the reeds, he saw two men with smoking guns in their hands.

Bang! Another wild duck fell into the water. All through the day, bullets whistled over the head of the poor duckling. "Of all places," cried the duckling, "Why did I choose this one!"

Finally silence descended. The hunters had departed and now, it was quite safe for the ugly duckling to find a more peaceful refuge.

Taking a careful look around, the ugly duckling made off across the marsh, swimming through channels with thick reeds on either side; sometimes waddling through sticky mud. There seemed no end to

the journey. Then, as the sun was setting, the duckling saw a hut close by.

Tired, hungry and so frightened, the poor little duckling decided to go to the hut to seek shelter for the night.

The old woman who lived in the hut was poor but kind. Taking pity on the ugly duckling, she let him eat along with her cat and chicken, and made a bed of straw for him by the fire.



But the cat and the chicken were unkind to the duckling, so again he took to the road.

Soon he came to a big wood, and there he found lovely ponds, and a river where he could swim to his heart's content. He was so ugly no other bird or animal would be friendly, but he was quite happy to be on his own and spent all the summer in this idyllic spot.

Winter came with its icy winds and perishing cold. One evening, shivering with the cold,



the ugly duckling saw a flock of noble swans, fly overhead. How graceful they looked, and oh! if only he could be like them.

As the winter got more severe, the duckling would certainly have died if a kindly farmer had not taken pity on him. The farmer put the duckling inside his coat and took him home. The warmth of the fire in the farmhouse, and the kindness of the farmer's wife saved his life. The children made him their pet and for the first time in his life the ugly duckling found happiness.

He stayed on the farm throughout the winter, and when spring came, the duckling felt something swelling his little heart. He felt a new power in his wings, which told him that he could fly for miles and miles without tiring.

Spreading his wings, the duckling rose into the sky and



flew on and on until he saw a lake beneath him, and with a graceful dive alighted on the water. As he was preening his feathers, three lovely swans glided up to him. How he wished he could be like them. In his mind he wondered if it was worth living just to be an ugly duckling.

He felt sure the swans would make fun of his ugliness. But they seemed to like him, as they circled around him giving friendly clucks. He felt quite shy and hung his head.

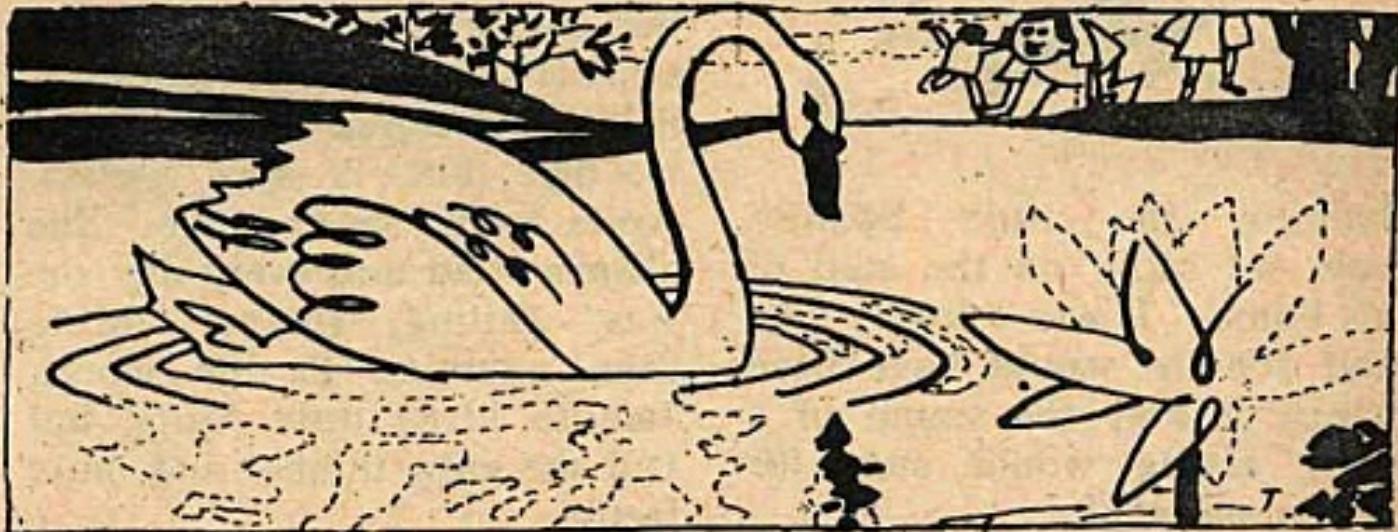
But wait! Who was this beautiful bird reflected in the water? Someone with a long

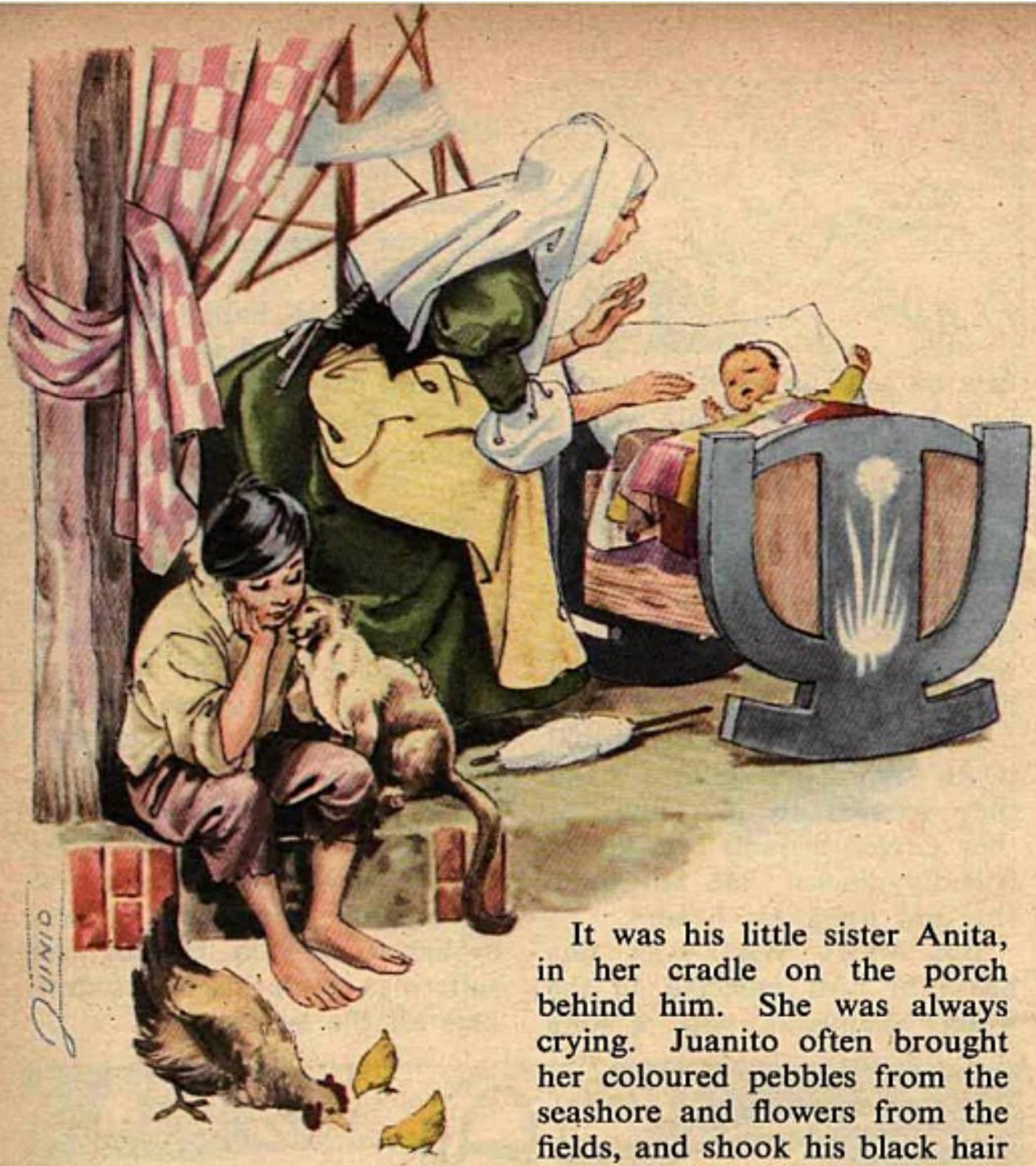
neck and white plumage just like the swans about him. Could it be...? Yes, it was his own reflection. He was a swan.

He was so happy he spun round and round in the water, flapping his large wings from which rose sprays of water making a rainbow in the spring sun.

Soon the news spread around about the new swan. Sparrows perched on the branches of trees twittered their praises; wild ducks swam by in silent admiration, and geese honked their good wishes as they flew overhead.

But the ugly duckling who was now a swan, did not boast of the new beauty bestowed upon him. He knew it was foolish to be vain, but his past sufferings made his new happiness all the sweeter.





Juanito, the little Spanish boy, sat sadly on the step of his home. It was a lovely day, and Juanito would have been happy if only the sound of a baby crying would stop for just a moment.

It was his little sister Anita, in her cradle on the porch behind him. She was always crying. Juanito often brought her coloured pebbles from the seashore and flowers from the fields, and shook his black hair at her, but it was useless. Anita would never smile. She always cried and every day she was getting thinner. More than anything in the world, Juanito loved little Anita, but still she grew thinner and more fretful.

BREAKFAST FOR ANITA

"It is of no use, Juanito," his mother said. "Anita, poor little angel, is not well. She cannot laugh. If only we could give her good goat's milk she would grow fat and well, but how can I get goat's milk for her? It is too dear to buy and we have hardly any money."

Juanito sat with his elbows on his knees and thought and thought. How could he get goat's milk for little Anita?

He knew that there were many goats on the hillsides, but they belonged to Antonio, the farmer, who made their milk into cheese and sold it in the city of Barcelona. While he sat sadly on the step, little Anita cried even louder and Juanito could not bear it any longer.

"Surely the goats can spare a little milk for her to make her grow fat and strong," he said, and he trotted away along the road towards the hillside.

On the way he clambered over a ditch to pick some of the young corn growing under the almond trees. It was as green and tender as grass, and very juicy. A little later he reached the bare hillsides where the goats were. He picked out a large one which looked friendly, sat down near to her and began to talk.

Juanito told the goat about Anita, how she used to laugh and gurgle, and how she was now not well and growing thinner. It was a long story, but Carlota the goat stayed and listened.

As he spoke, Juanito held out the bunch of young corn. It was sweet and juicy. Grass was scarce on the hill and Carlota was tired of trying to chew the myrtle bushes which were so hard and prickly.

"Carlota, come and give your milk to little Anita," said Juanito.



He started off slowly down the road. Carlota followed. She was tied by a rope from one foreleg to one hindleg, so that she could not wander away. She walked clumsily, a step and then a jerk, a step and then a jerk, but Juanito held out the corn. "Carlota, come and give your milk to little Anita," he kept on saying.

So they made their way back to the village and Juanito had almost got to his home when he saw a big man striding towards him. His heart sank. It was Antonio the farmer.

Antonio, however, was in a happy mood. He had just heard that his goat's milk cheese had fetched a high price in Barcelona, and if one of his goats had wandered down into the village, well, it was no matter.

"Good morning," he said. "That's my goat Carlota, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," stammered Juanito. "I'll take her back to the farm."

"Many thanks," nodded Antonio, and he walked on.

Juanito's mother was still rocking the crying baby. She looked up and saw Antonio talking to Juanito, then she

saw the goat standing outside, as if Antonio himself had brought it.

"Carlota," coaxed Juanito. "Come and give your milk to little Anita."

Without more ado Carlota was milked and Anita had her first breakfast of good goat's milk.

Several weeks passed by. Francesca the farmer's wife stood in the doorway and looked down over the field where the herd of goats was grazing. During those weeks she had been puzzled many times, for she knew nothing about little Anita, and the fact that she was now growing rosy and strong.

"That goat Carlota is bewitched," she said to Antonio. "A few weeks ago she was the best milker of the herd, and now she has nothing. I may as well save myself the trouble of milking her. I tell you she is bewitched."

Antonio got up from his chair and came and stood beside her. "Do you mean Carlota?" he asked. "That's the one I found wandering down in the village a few weeks ago. I thought her rope was a little long, so I hobbled her tighter."

"Perhaps the rope is too tight and she feeds with difficulty," said the farmer's wife. "Better loosen it."

Antonio agreed. He went to Carlota and untied the rope that fastened her foreleg to her hindleg. He felt in his pocket for a bit more rope, but finding none, he sighed and went back to the farmhouse.

For a while Carlota stood meekly by the fig-tree, but then started to walk. How easy it was to walk today, without a step and then a jerk. She walked a little faster and then began to run.

That evening when the goats were driven in Carlota was missing.

"It is not much loss," grumbled Francesca. "What is the use of such a goat that gives no milk?"

Antonio remembered that Carlota was not hobbled and next morning he set out to search for her. On the mountain path he met Juanito.

"I have lost Carlota," said Antonio.

Juanito was just going to answer, "So have I!" but changed his mind and said nothing.

"She was not hobbled," ex-

plained Antonio. "Come with me. Your young legs can climb faster than mine."

At last they reached a cliff-edge overlooking the sea. There on the very edge, with a sheer drop down into the sea, stood Carlota. Antonio wrung his hands in despair.

"Do not move or make a sound," he said. "If she takes fright she will fall and be drowned."

They stood for half an hour, and then Juanito made up his mind. "Carlota!" he called. "Carlota, come and give your milk to little Anita."

Carlota turned and trotted away from the cliff edge. She came to Juanito and put her nose against his hand.

The three set off home again and for a long time Antonio did not speak. At last he asked, "What was it that you said to the goat?"

Juanito hung his head, and then told him the whole story.

"And is little Anita well and strong now?" asked Antonio.

"Yes, sir, and now she laughs once more," said Juanito.

"Well, her breakfast will be late today," said Antonio. "You and Carlota had better hurry. My wife dislikes the goat, so you had better keep her—but be careful not to lose her."



THREE COPPER COINS

Chiang was a tobacco seller. He was too poor to own a shop, so he pedalled his wares in the streets. He would put his tobacco into two wicker baskets, which he slung on either side of a pole. Then placing the pole across his shoulders he would set out from home early every morning.

One morning, Chiang was wending his way through a very crowded street, when an old man, dressed in rags, patted him on the back. Chiang stopped and turned round to see who had tapped him and on seeing the old man he asked, "What do you want, old man?"

"Young fellow, will you sell me enough tobacco to fill my pipe?" Saying this the old man took a clay pipe with a narrow mouth, out of his pocket. Chiang nodded his consent and looked for a spot on which to put his baskets. But the street was so crowded with people, vehicles and animals, that it was impossible for him to put his baskets down anywhere. So he asked the old man to help himself to the tobacco.

The old man took a pinch of tobacco out of one of Chiang's baskets and put it into his pipe. Then he took another and another and still his pipe was not filled. Chiang watched saucer-eyed with amazement and wonder, as the old man took pinch after pinch of tobacco from his baskets, until both the baskets were quite empty. Then pressing three coppers into Chiang's hand, the old man leisurely lit his pipe and disappeared into the crowd smiling contentedly.

Chiang was very angry with himself for allowing the old man to empty both his baskets and for accepting only three coppers in return. He threw the three coppers into the rear basket and made his way home, in a very bad mood.

"Not only have I made a bad bargain; but now my empty basket weighs more than it did before," he muttered to himself, as the rear basket began to weigh him down. Soon it became so heavy that he could not carry

it any longer and had to put it down on the road. Looking inside he found that the basket was almost full of coppers and the pile of coins kept on growing before his very eyes. It took every ounce of his strength to put both the full and the empty baskets on his head and to stagger home with them. When he arrived home, he stumbled across his doorstep and scattered the coppers all over the room. He picked up all the coins one by one and put them into a chest, in which he kept the few treasures he possessed.

Then Chiang went out into his backyard and lighting his pipe began to make plans for the future. He was very pleased now that he had allowed the old man to empty both his baskets of tobacco without saying a harsh word to him. Obviously the coins that the old man had paid him with were magic ones. After some time he heard strange clinking noises coming from his house. Imagine his surprise, when he hurried inside and found that the pile of coppers had grown so much that they had forced open the lid of the chest and



were spilling on to the floor. Chiang spent the rest of the day collecting the coins and filling every bin and tin that he owned with them.

Chiang was now a happy man. But the more his coppers multiplied, the more avaricious and money-crazy he became. So he decided to make more money, the easy way, by becoming a pawn-broker.

As time went by Chiang's new business flourished and his coppers kept increasing as well. Chiang was a changed man. He became more and more ruthless. He took advantage of poor people, who were in dire need of money, by lending them the money and charging them very high interest. So much so, that he became one of the richest men in the land.

One morning, his first customer of the day was a very old man, who brought a bag with him containing some silver ornaments for sale.

Chiang examined the ornaments and in the ingratiating manner that pawn-brokers have, said, "These ornaments have more copper than silver in them. How much were you expecting for them?"

"Three coppers," replied the customer.

Chiang could not believe his ears. The ornaments were of pure silver and were worth quite a substantial amount. Hurrying to his vault, Chiang quickly locked the silver ornaments in a safe. Then going to his chest he took out three coppers wondering all the time if the old man would change his mind by the time he got back. But Chiang's fears were ground-

less, because the old man was still there waiting patiently for the three coppers. Chiang gave the three coppers to the old man, who smiled and putting them in his pocket walked away.

The next morning when Chiang went into his vault he was very surprised and shocked to find that his pile of coppers and the silver ornaments had vanished.

Chiang realized how foolish he had been. He had become so greedy for money, that he had not recognized the old man who had visited him yesterday. He was the same old man who had given him his first three coppers. Chiang learnt his lesson a bit late—that when God has provided in plenty, one should not attach too much importance to money and should never resort to mean ways of making more.





THE PRINCE

Once, on a far-away island in the sunny South Seas, there lived a king who had only one son.

The people were happy for the sun always shone and there was always plenty of food. Only the king was sad, for his little son had been dumb from birth no one had been able to make him utter a sound.

On the same island, there

lived a lively, jolly rogue named Pango, who loved lazing in the sun and playing tricks on people, but hated work of any kind. When there was work to be done in the fields, Pango was usually nowhere to be found.

At last, the villagers grew tired of this and they said to Pango, "We will not do all your share of the work for you



AND THE PEACOCK

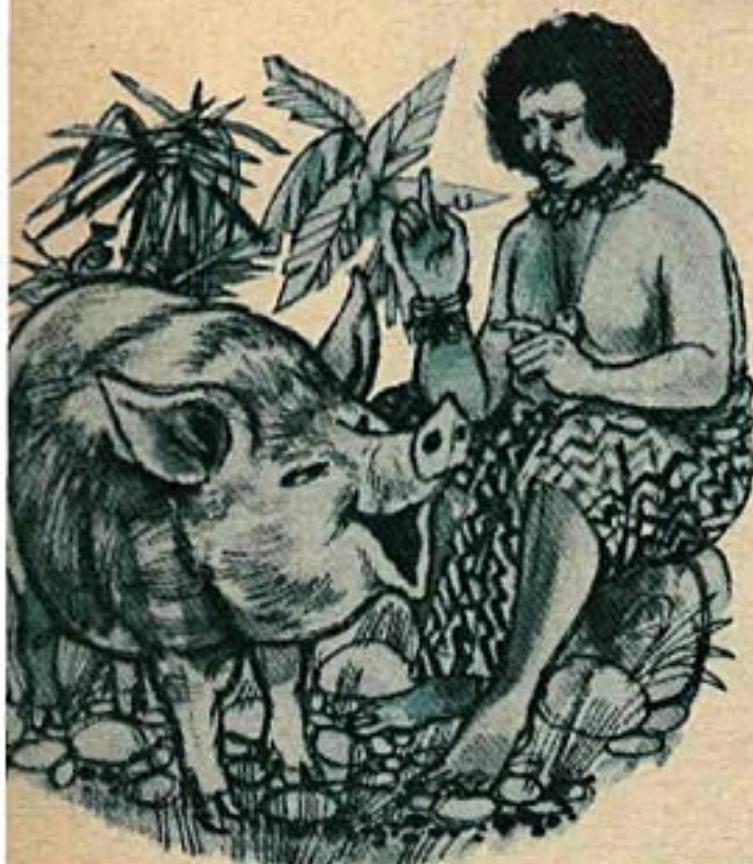
any longer. Go out into the world and earn your own living."

Pango left the village and set out to seek his fortune. At last he felt hungry and he stopped at a little wayside house, hoping to be given some food.

The woman who lived there gladly shared her meal with him and while they ate, she

told him all the news of those parts. She told him about the king, who lived in a fine palace not far away and the rich reward he had offered for any one who could give his little son a voice.

"He has offered a room full of food, a room full of gold and a room full of fine clothes, but so far no one has claimed the reward," she told Pango.



"What would you say if you talked to the king?" asked Pango.

Pango decided to travel to the king's palace and try to find the prince a voice, so he set out once more, pondering the problem deeply, but however hard he racked his brains, he could see no solution at all.

Soon he came across a little old man. He seemed the oldest and frailest man Pango had ever seen and he was carrying a bundle which seemed almost as large as himself.

Being a kindly soul at heart, Pango stopped and said, "Good

day to you, father. That looks a heavy bundle. Let me carry it for you."

"Thank you, my son, you are very kind," said the old man and as they went on together, he asked Pango where he was going.

"Oh, I am on my way to the king's palace, to see if I can find a voice for the prince," replied Pango. "But I do not yet know how I shall do it. The problem is a tough one. However, the reward is great."

"Is that all?" said the little old man. "It is quite simple. All you have to do is to find a beautiful voice, which has the power to charm all who hear it and make sure the prince hears it, too. It will charm him also so much that he will feel he must imitate it and the moment he opens his mouth to try, the voice will belong to him."

With that, the old man took his bundle from Pango and went on his way.

Pango was delighted with his piece of good fortune and as he went along, he met a pig. "Tell me, my friend, what would you say if you went to the palace to talk to the king?" he asked.

"Grumph, grumph, grumph," replied the pig and Pango shuddered. "That is not a fit voice for a prince," he said to himself.

Next he met a goat. "What would you say if you went to the palace to talk to the king?" he asked.

"Bleh, bleh, bleh," replied the goat and Pango thought, "That is not a fine enough voice for a prince."

Farther along the road, he met a hen, so he stopped and said, "Tell me little hen, if you went to the palace to talk to the king, what would you say?"

"Cluck, cluck, cluck," replied the hen and Pango shook his head sadly. "That is not nearly good enough for a prince," he thought.

Pango was almost in despair, when he saw an ugly, dull grey peacock sitting on a fence. "What would you say, if you went to the palace to talk to the king?" he asked.

The peacock stared at him proudly. "I would say nothing," it replied haughtily, "for I would only have to open my mouth and sing and my voice would charm them all into silence." With that, the peacock opened its mouth and sang a song so

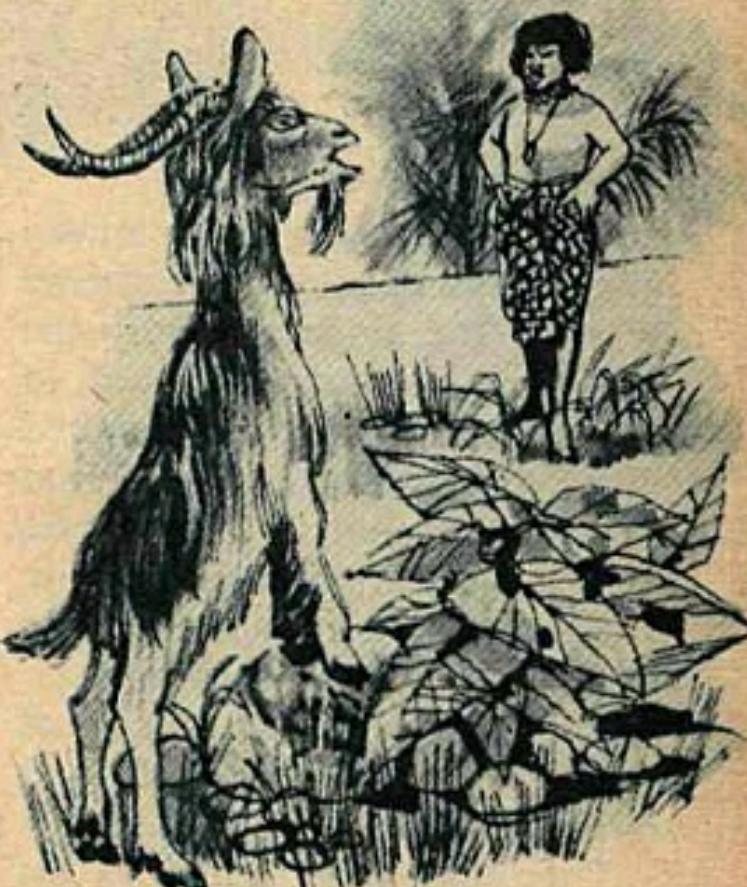
beautiful that even the wind stopped rustling the leaves and fell silent.

Pango was delighted. "Surely that is a voice fit for a prince," he thought.

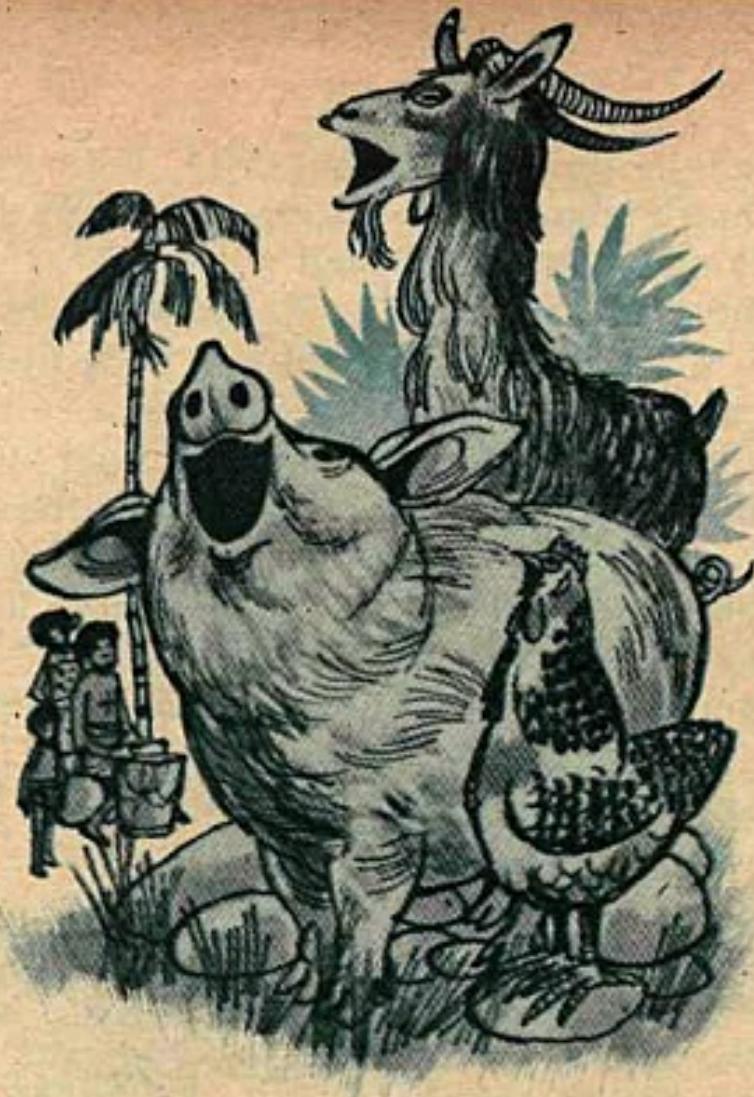
Pango went to the palace, asked to see the king and promised to find the prince a voice.

"You must hold a contest in the palace," Pango said, "and offer a great reward for the finest singer."

When the day for the contest



"That is not a fine enough voice for a prince," thought Pango.



arrived, the king and queen and all the court were gathered to hear the singers. Only the little dumb prince was not to be seen, for Pango had placed him out of sight and told him to listen carefully. "When you hear a voice which charms you, you must open your mouth and imitate it," Pango told him.

First, the pig sang, a song of grunts and snorts which was most unmusical.

Then the goat sang and his voice was rough and gruff. Then the hen sang, crowing and clucking and finally all three sang

together, making a terrible din, so that the king longed to put his hands over his ears.

The dull, grey peacock listened haughtily. Then, it walked proudly forward and opened its mouth. It sang a song so beautiful that the whole court was silent and still.

The little prince thought he had never heard anything so beautiful and he opened his mouth to imitate the song. To everyone's surprise, the peacock's song was repeated from a different part of the court-yard and the delighted king

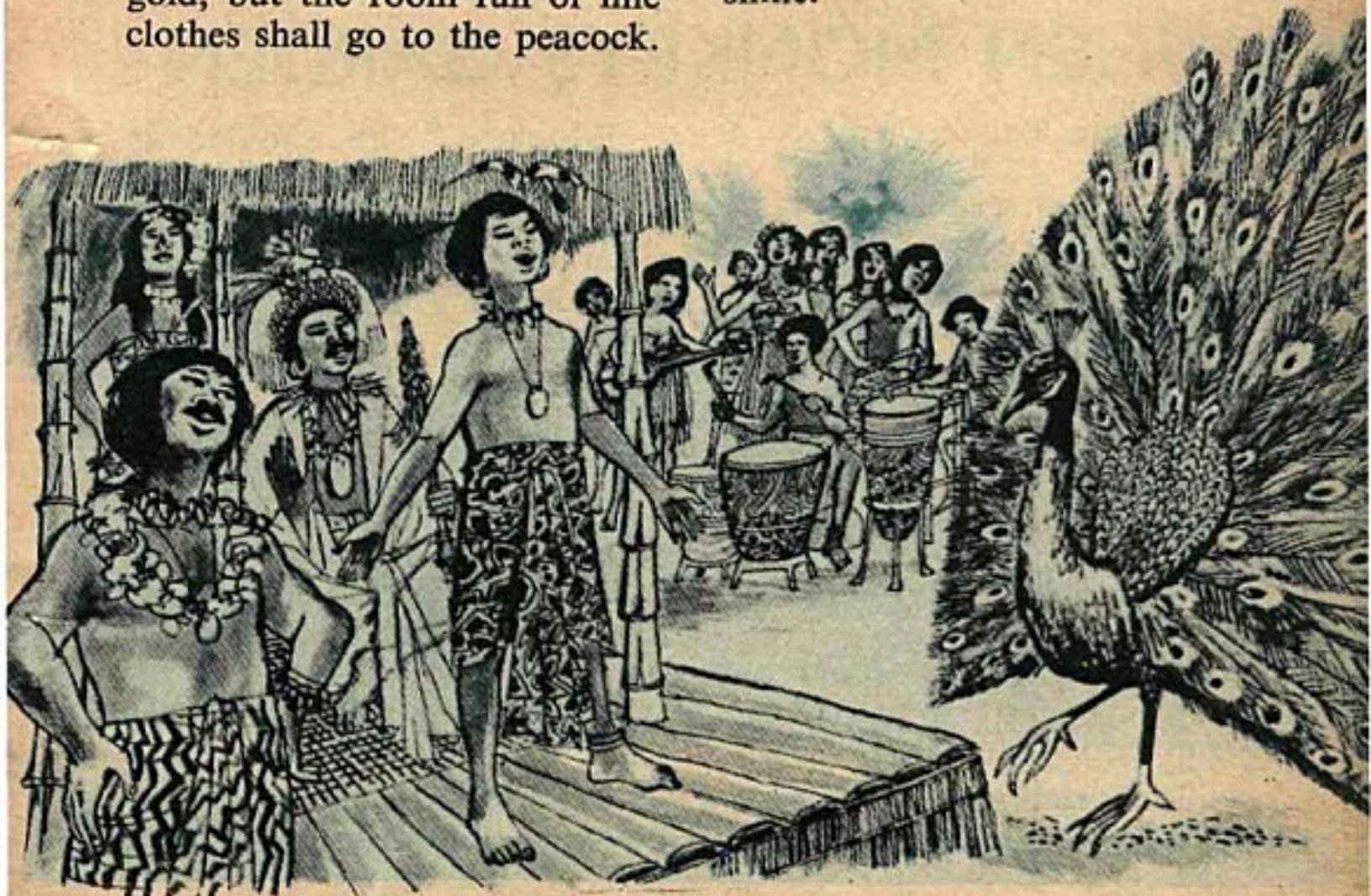
saw that it was his son who was singing.

The peacock opened its mouth, but now only an ugly croak came out. "You have tricked me," it cried in fury.

The king was very pleased. "You have done a great service and you shall be well rewarded," he told Pango. "However, you must also be punished for tricking the peacock. You shall have the room full of food and the room full of gold, but the room full of fine clothes shall go to the peacock.

In future he shall always be a most beautiful bird to make up for the loss of his voice."

So it happened. Pango received his reward, the peacock lost his voice but was dressed in the most gorgeous colours and so stayed as proud as ever and the little prince gained a voice. He was so happy that he sang wherever he went and all the people of the island heard him and followed his example, making their island a land of song as well as sunshine.





WHEN MONKEYS GARDEN

Once upon a time there was a king, who had a troop of monkeys. It was in charge of a huge monkey.

As the king's gardener was going on a day's leave, he said to the leader of the monkeys, "Friend, for today, please command your followers to water the plants in the king's garden."

The leader readily agreed to the request.

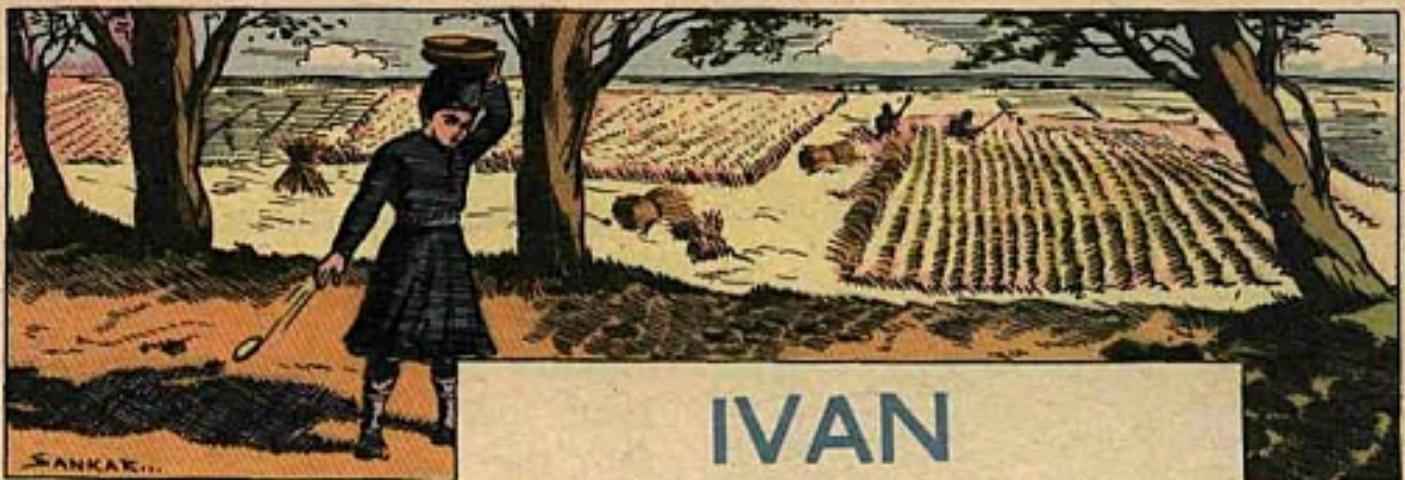
All the monkeys turned out in full strength to water the plants with pots in their hands, and were doing their job vigorously, when the leader had a doubt.

"Monkeys," he shouted at them, "I hope you are not wasting the water. Give each plant what it needs and not a drop more."

"Sir," one monkey asked, "How are we to know, how much water each plant needs?"

"Nothing simpler," exclaimed their chief, "Take each plant out of the ground and measure the length of its root and do the watering accordingly."

When the gardener returned from his day's leave, he was heart broken to find all the plants in the garden, uprooted and thrown aside.



IVAN THE FOOL

Many years ago there lived a farmer in Russia who had three sons. The youngest of the three was called Ivan, but he was a halfwit. His family never gave him any work to do.

When the two elder boys had grown up and begun to work, the mother kept Ivan at home to help her in the house.

One morning she called Ivan and handing him a basket of cakes said, "Son, take these cakes which I have prepared, for your brothers' midday-meal. They are out grazing the sheep in the fields."

Ivan put the basket on his head and set off for the fields.

He had not gone far when looking back he saw his own shadow. He was puzzled. If he walked, the shadow walked; if he stopped, it also stopped.

He turned upon the shadow and cried, "You, fool! Why do you follow me wherever I go?"

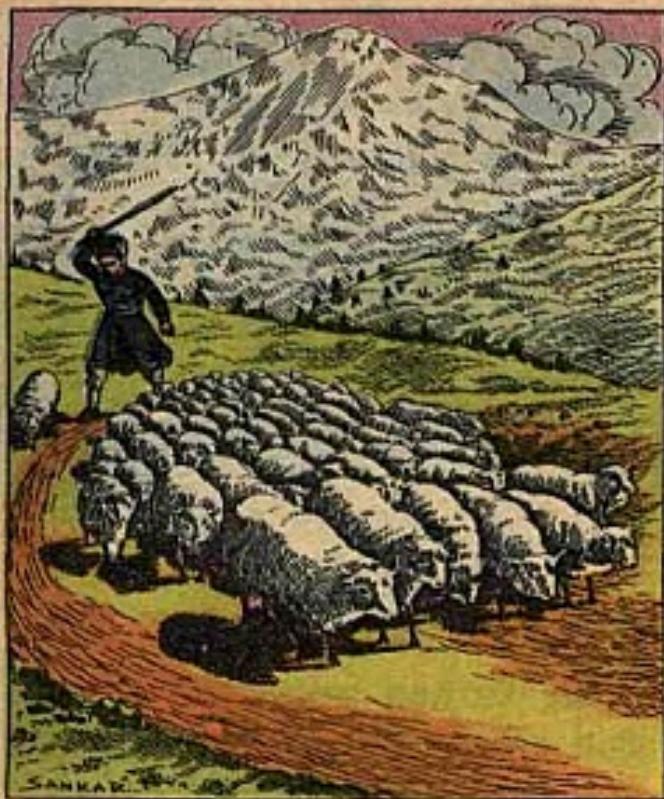
But the shadow made no reply. When he again looked back there was the shadow, as he thought, at its old tricks again.

"I see!" Ivan exclaimed, "So you are after the cakes, I am carrying in the basket."

Ivan laid the basket down and taking a cake from it threw it to the shadow to appease it.

Taking a few steps forward, Ivan turned to see if the shadow was still following him. There it was! So Ivan threw another cake at the shadow and walked on. He turned again and found the shadow still following him.

Every time he discovered the shadow following him, Ivan threw another cake at it from



his basket. Soon the basket was empty, and with a curse, Ivan threw the empty basket at the shadow and walked on.

"What brings you here, Ivan?" his brothers asked, when they found him coming to them empty handed.

"Mother has sent me," replied Ivan, "to give you your lunch."

"Where is it then, you fool?" asked the brothers.

"As I was bringing it," replied Ivan, pointing to his shadow, "This fellow begged of all the cakes from me and wouldn't leave me till I had given him the lot."

The two brothers who were

hungry, boxed Ivan on the ears and shouted, "We'll go to the neighbouring village to get something to eat. Meanwhile you watch the sheep. All you have to do is to see that they do not stray."

After the brothers had gone, Ivan was greatly annoyed that the sheep would not stay in one place, but go on wandering in search of grass. Failing in all his efforts to keep them together, Ivan took a cudgel and broke the legs of some of the sheep.

By the time the brothers had returned, quite a few of the sheep had been lamed, and so the brothers gave Ivan a good beating and sent him home.

From then onwards, the mother never dared to send Ivan on any errand. Years passed by. Ivan had grown into manhood, and both his parents had died. Though he had grown, his mind remained as blank as before.

Ivan's elder brother argued, "Mother has made a spoilt child of this fellow. How long can we feed him in his idleness? I know we can't drive him out, for that would get us a bad name. But we can set him to do some useful work which



would enable him to earn his food."

The harvest festival was approaching. Lots of things had to be bought from the city, so the brothers gave Ivan a long list of the goods to be bought and told Ivan to go to the city to buy them.

Ivan set out with a horse-drawn cart. In the city he made the purchases. As soon as he loaded the cart with his purchases of a bag of salt, a large wooden table, grain, pots, tin-plates, cups, saucers, and spoons, he began his return journey.

He had not gone very far,

when the horse got tired and began to slow down.

"Oh , I now see it," Ivan exclaimed, "the horse goes slow because the cart is overloaded."

Promptly he looked at all the things in the cart to see which he could throw away. He decided the wooden table could go, as it had four legs the same as a horse, so it could very well walk home.

So out went the table on to the road-side with a clattering bang. As he rode away Ivan called to the table, "Lazy bones, walk home!"

Now after journeying for a while, Ivan found some crows



flying over his cart, pecking at the sack of grain.

"Poor crows!" cried Ivan, "they seem to be hungry. I'll feed them now."

He took out the plates he had purchased from the city, and filling them with grain, laid them all on the road-side, saying, "Eat them to your fill, dear birds."

A little later, Ivan soon came to a little wood. There he found some charred tree-stumps and thought 'Poor stumps, you've nothing to cover your heads

against the cold'. So he inverted a pot on each of the tree stumps.

Later on, Ivan came to a stream. Feeling thirsty he got into it and cupping his hands, slaked his thirst. Then he thought of making the horse also drink, thinking that it must also be thirsty after the long journey to and from the city.

The horse, however, flatly refused to drink. "Poor horse!" cried Ivan, "the water must be insipid."

So he emptied the sack of salt into the stream thinking that it would add to the taste of the water for the horse.

As the horse still refused to drink, Ivan began beating the horse, shouting, "You ungrateful thing! Take this and this for not drinking."

Under the rain of blows, the poor horse wearily slumped to the ground.

Now the things Ivan had to take home had so dwindled in number, that he was able to carry them on his back. They merely consisted of the spoons, cups and saucers. The clanking sound they made as Ivan walked forward sounded in his ears like, "Ivan the fool, Ivan the empty head."

Maddened at these imaginary taunts, he threw the sack into the forest.

Finally, when he reached home, he had nothing that he had bought in the city. Even the horse and cart were no more.

When Ivan told his brothers all that had happened, they laid about him with a cudgel and cried, "You lout, if at least, you don't get the pots you've crowned the tree stumps with, we'll kill you."

Ivan retraced his steps to the wood where the tree stumps stood. He made holes in the pots and passing a rope through them, bundled them up and carried them on his back.

When the brothers saw the holes in the pots, their wrath knew no bounds and they gave him another sound thrashing.

Finally, they themselves had

to set out to buy the things needed for the festival. But before they went they asked their brother to watch the pot that was boiling on the stove.

Sore from the sound beating he had received from his brothers, Ivan sat nursing his bruised limbs and as he watched the pot, it seemed to make mock of him, singing, "Ivan the halfwit! Ivan the idiot!"

"Stop!" thundered Ivan at the pot.

But as the pot sang louder, Ivan lost his temper and belaboured the pot with a cudgel. Bang! the pot broke and the fragments with the cooking food, lay all over the floor.

When the brothers returned home and found what Ivan had done, they concluded that their brother was a real empty-head, and that nothing would ever change him.



WHAT ARE THESE FLAGS?



Here is the National, Merchant and Ensign of the Netherlands, so often known as Holland; but Holland is a name which strictly belongs only to a part of the country. At one time the flag had an orange stripe where there is now red; orange, white and blue were the colours of William, Prince of Orange, who freed the land of Spanish rule in the 17th century.



Here is the National (and Merchant) flag of the Republic of Tunisia, a country of North Africa. Once part of the Turkish Empire, the country's flag is like Turkey's. The crescent and five-pointed star are emblems of the Islamic faith.



Here is the National flag of Mexico, the State which links North and South America. The emblem on the white stripe is of an eagle holding a serpent in its beak; this is concerned with a legend of the Aztecs, a people who ruled the land before the Spaniards arrived in 1519. After some 300 years under the Spanish conquerors, Mexico ended this rule and set up as an independent State.

HISTORY—

Cricket 2

ORIGINALLY, there were only two stumps. These were 12 inches high and are said to have been 24 inches apart, although some people doubt this. A ball could certainly go between them but, if it did, the batsman was reckoned not to be out. In any case the distance between the two stumps later became less and a stump was laid across them.

The picture on the other side of this index card shows an early cricketer with some of the first stumps—a foot high and about 6 inches apart.

It is thought, however, that the old method of scoring runs was for the batsmen to move between two holes made between the two stumps. A batsman could be "run out" by a fielder getting the ball into either of the holes before the batsman was back in position.

HISTORY

Cricket 4

NOWADAYS there are various types of bowlers in cricket but they all have one thing in common. They bowl overhand. At one time, however, this was not true. Bowling in cricket was all underhand.

C. H. Simpson-Hayward, however, was a fast overhand bowler when he played at school. It was only later that he took to lob-bowling or high lob underhand bowling.

C. H. Simpson-Hayward is shown in the picture on the left on this index card.

W. G. Grace, who was a fine bat, was also a good round-arm or overhand bowler.

The picture on the right on the other side of this index card shows W. G. Grace bowling.

HISTORY—

Cricket 1

CRICKET is usually considered to be England's national game and, although in its present form it is not particularly old, it is believed that a game something like the cricket we know was played as long ago as the 12th century. A poet of the time mentions it and even describes how one man throws a ball at two sticks and another man tries to prevent him from hitting it.

The earliest match of which the result has been recorded is one that took place on the Artillery Ground in 1744. This was between a team representing England and a Kent country team. Kent won, scoring 53 in the first innings and 58 for 9 in the second innings, a historic game.

The picture on the other side of this index card shows the Artillery Ground.

HISTORY—

Cricket 3

ONE of the most famous cricket grounds in the world is Lord's, the home of the Marylebone Cricket Club (the M.C.C.). The founder of Lord's was Thomas Lord, a groundsman at the White Conduit Club in London.

The picture on the other side of this index card is an early print of Lord's.

The Marylebone Cricket Club was formed in 1788 and this club is still recognised as the governing body of the cricket world. The rules of cricket were revised and re-issued by the M.C.C. and they are the M.C.C. rules which apply today.

Another famous London cricket ground is the Oval. This is on the site of a park which once belonged to Sir Noel Caron, a 17th century Dutch ambassador to England. It was opened as a cricket ground in 1846.

HISTORY

Cricket 1



HISTORY

Cricket 2



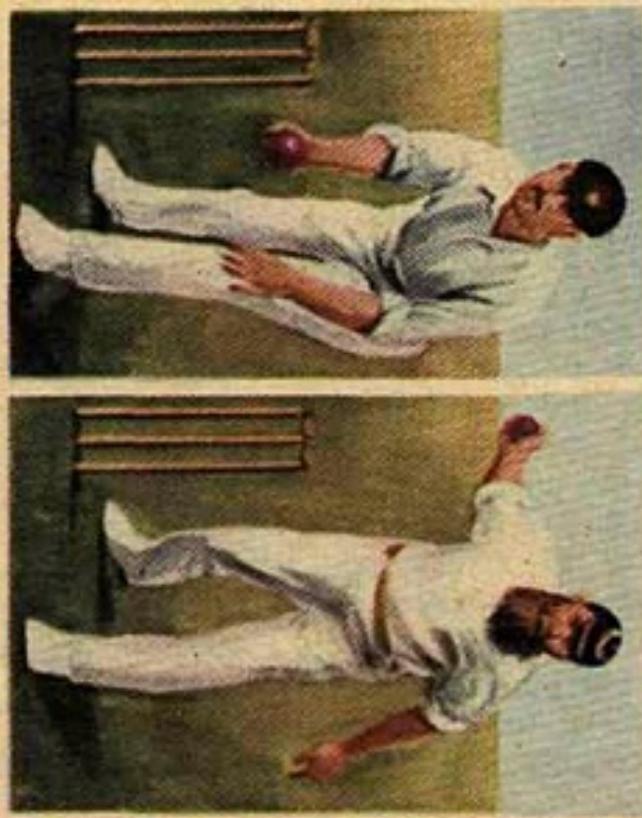
HISTORY

Cricket 3



HISTORY

Cricket 4



GEOGRAPHY—

Spain 1



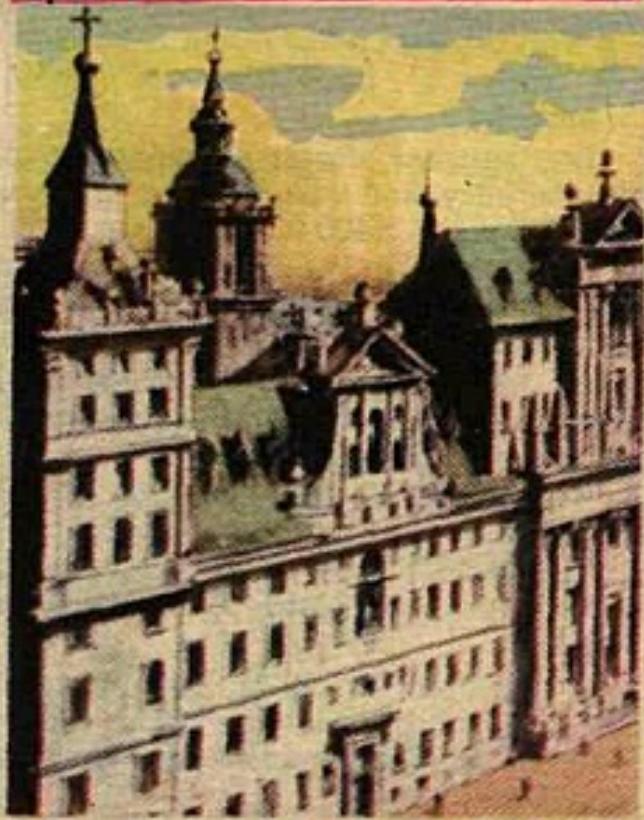
GEOGRAPHY—

Spain 2



GEOGRAPHY—

Spain 3



GEOGRAPHY—

Spain 4



GEOGRAPHY—

Spain 2

SPAIN is a fertile country and numbers among its agricultural products fruits which flourish well in the sun-oranges, lemons, pomegranates, bananas, apricots, grapes and olives.

Most of the oranges grown in Spain are exported to Germany, the United Kingdom and France.

One of the principal exports, however, is olive oil. An olive press is shown in the picture on the other side of this index card.

The olives are gathered by shaking them to the ground and picking them up. They are then taken to the press where the oil is squeezed out by placing the olives in layers between round mats made of fibre.

GEOGRAPHY—

Spain 4

PRIMARY education throughout Spain is free but it is not compulsory as there are not enough schools to make this a practical proposition. There are 12 universities in Spain itself and one in the Spanish-owned Canary Islands. All the universities in Spain, with the exception of the University of Pamplona, are government controlled.

The flag of Spain consists of bands of red, yellow and red, running horizontally, with the coat of arms on the yellow band.

The Spanish unit of currency is the peseta and, in 1969, the average rate of exchange was 9 pesetas to the Indian rupee.

The picture shows traditional Spanish costumes of Salamanca.

GEOGRAPHY—

Spain 1

SPAIN is a European country and occupies about eleven-thirteenths of the area known as the Iberian peninsula. The rest of the peninsula is Portugal.

The coastline of Spain runs for 1,317 miles along the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Spain is bounded on the north by France and the Bay of Biscay, on the south and east by the Mediterranean Sea and on the west by Portugal and the Atlantic Ocean.

The chief of the mountain ranges are the Pyrenees, the Cantabrian Mountains, Sierra Morena and Sierra Nevada. Among large rivers are the Douro, the Tagus, the Ebro, the Guadalquivir and the Guadiana.

GEOGRAPHY—

Spain 3

THE capital city of Spain is Madrid, with a population of about 3 million.

It is situated almost in the centre of the country and stands on a plateau at a height of 2,400 ft. above sea level.

The climate of Madrid is extremely varied. At certain times of the year, it is exposed to icy winds and at other times to the burning heat of the sun. The variation in temperature has been as much as 50 deg. in one day.

The picture on the other side of this index card shows the Escurial (El Escorial). This is a monastery and palace, situated some 31 miles from Madrid.

It was built for Philip II of Spain and the first stone was laid in 1563. It was finished in 1584 and is constructed of grey granite.



THE WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

Hallo again, CHANDAMAMA readers. This is Baron Munchausen speaking. Last month I told you how I was captured by the Turks and made a quick trip to the Moon and back.

Soon after that, the war with the Turks came to an end and I went back to Russia, to continue my wonderful adventures and travels.

It was a very cold Winter when I left Russia—so cold in fact that the Sun itself got chilblains, the effect of which may be still seen on its face, though some people call them sun-spots.

I decided that in such cold weather it would be more comfortable to leave my horse Emperor behind in Russia and to travel by stage-coach.

For many miles we clattered over the icy roads and on one part of the journey we came to some very narrow lanes, only just wide enough to take one coach.

"Ho, there, my good friend," I cried to the postilion on the coach. "Give a signal on your horn to warn other travellers that we are taking this narrow road."

"A good idea, Baron," he



answered. "Two coaches cannot pass each other, so I will warn all others to keep out of our way."

He put the horn to his mouth and blew with all his might, but all in vain. He blew until he was red in the face, but he could not make the horn sound. Not a single note came out of it.

"I cannot understand it, Baron," he gasped. "I have blown all the tunes I know into the horn and yet not one note of music comes out."

I was about to tell him to try again, but by then it was too late. Another coach came racing

down the road from the opposite direction and we both had to stop in a hurry, neither of us being able to make way for the other. We were stopped, and stuck.

"What can we do, Baron?" asked the postilion.

I could see that he had no solution to the problem and as none of the others seemed hopeful I decided to take matters into my own hands.

"Leave it to me," I said.

I jumped out of the coach and undid the harness of the two horses. Being fairly strong, I then picked up the coach, wheels and all, and placed it on my head.

Next I jumped down into a gully beside the narrow road (which, on account of the weight of the coach was a little difficult) and came out of the gully again by another jump into the road beyond the other carriage.

That part having been done, I then went back for the horses. Picking them up I placed one under each arm. One of them was a spirited animal and as I jumped down into the gully it showed its great dislike by kicking and snorting in a very violent manner.

However, I soon stopped all



that by putting its back legs into one of my coat pockets, thus keeping it quiet until I had jumped out of the gully on to the road again.

It was easy then to re-harness the horses and with a clear road in front of us, we bowled merrily along with no more trouble.

That evening we pulled up at an inn, intending to stay the night. It was a pleasant place, warm and friendly. My postilion placed his horn on the big mantelpiece above a great

roaring fire while we refreshed ourselves with good food and drink.

Suddenly we heard a strange sound. Tereng! Tereng! Teng! Teng!

It was coming from the mantelpiece above the fire and when we looked, we now found the reason why the coach postilion had not been able to sound his horn.

The weather had been so cold that his tunes were frozen up inside the horn, and with the thawing effect of the great fire

they now came pouring out in notes of music.

Thus, without again putting his mouth to the horn, the honest fellow kept us all amused with his tunes, such as "The King of Prussia's March," "Over the Hills and Far Away" and many other favourite melodies.

For over an hour we were greatly entertained, until the horn thawed out completely and its tunes ended.

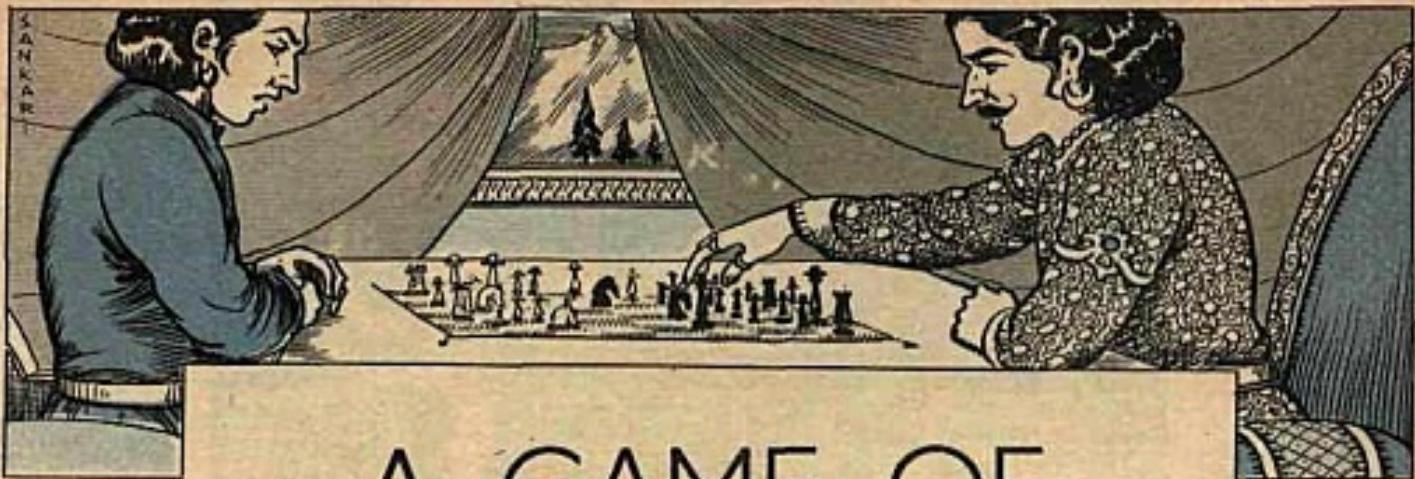
"How wonderful that was," I cried. "As I have often remarked in my many travels, the works of Nature are most ama-

zing at times."

When the entertainment was over, I went to bed, still humming the merry tunes, and feeling very content with my evening's fun. This was to be the last evening I should spend in Russia.

Many travellers, when they tell of their adventures, have a habit of saying that they have seen a great deal more than they really have, but I can assure you that what I have said is quite true —and I am now about to tell you of my adventures at sea, which are even far more wonderful.





A GAME OF CHESS

Long, long ago, there was a King in Northern India who loved to play chess. Naturally he was an exceptionally good player, and over the course of many years, very few could claim to have beaten the King at his favourite game.

Of course, everyone, including the rank beginners, wanted to play chess with the King. Consequently there were always would-be champions clamouring at the palace gates, but none of them knew very much about the game, and in the end, the King became so disgruntled that he issued a proclamation to the effect that whoever played and lost a game of chess against him, would be beheaded.

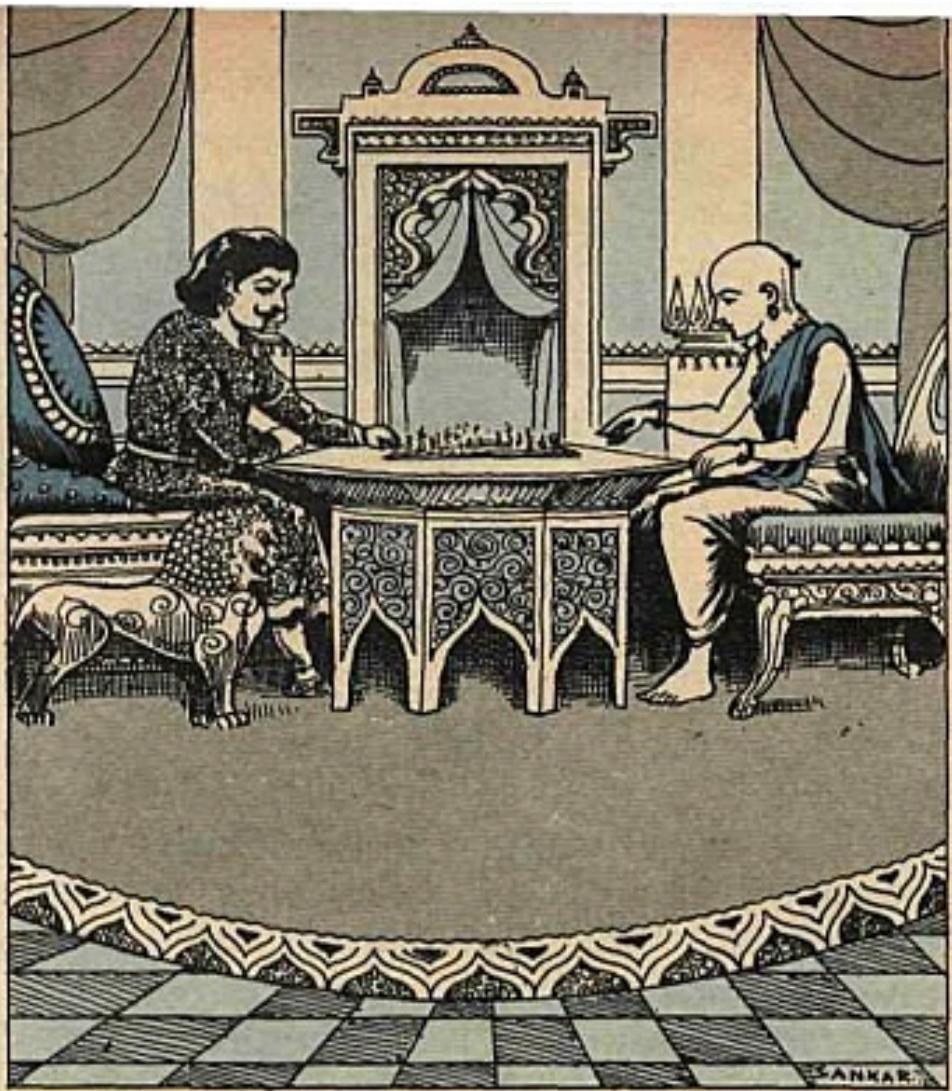
This certainly dampened

enthusiasm, because it is not very nice to have one's head lopped off over a game of chess.

Months went by without chess being played at the palace, and then one day, a scholarly looking individual from a neighbouring kingdom, presented himself at the palace, and challenged the King to play him chess.

"I accept your challenge," said the King. "But I hope you realise my friend, that if you lose the game, you will also your head."

The scholar merely smiled. "Yes, your Majesty, I have heard of your proclamation. Maybe I will lose the game and my head. On the other hand, I may win. What then?"



"Impossible," snorted the King. "No one has beaten me for years. But if by some mischance you did manage to win, you can have anything you wish."

"That sounds perfectly fair," said the scholar. "But all I want would be some corn. And let it be measured by a chess board, by one grain of corn on the first square, then doubled on each successive square, until all the sixty-four squares of the board are accounted for."

The King was highly amused. "You could have asked for

gold, jewels or even part of my kingdom. Instead you ask a mere pittance. You must be a fool, and you deserve to lose your head."

The scholar merely shrugged his shoulders. "Your Majesty, I not only hope to win the game, but methinks I shall have a double win."

"We shall see," chortled the King. And he ordered one of his ministers to fetch the chess set, and to tell the executioner to sharpen his sword.

The game started with the King very confident and in no

time he captured several pieces. But the scholar appeared quite unconcerned, and you would never think that his head was at stake on the game. Then the King, perhaps over-confident, made a rash move, which the scholar was quick to see, and the next time the King looked at the board, he was horrified to see that he was 'checkmated' and so the game was lost.

The King admitted defeat with good grace, and praised the scholar for his clever play. Then he asked him, "Before

we began the game, you mentioned you would have a double win. Exactly what did you mean?"

"That I will explain after I receive my prize of the corn," replied the scholar.

The King was still curious, but he ordered that the corn be measured as the scholar had laid down.

The chief minister hurried away on this errand but after an hour, he returned looking very dazed and bewildered.

"Your Majesty," he stam-



mered. "The-store keepers tell me that if you take one grain of corn and double it sixty-four times according to the number of squares on a chess board, the total number of grains, when added together, comes to the staggering figure of well over eighteen million, million, million!"

"What is more," said the shaken minister. "The store-keepers tell me that if we employ a hundred men to work day and night it would take many years to count such a huge number. But that did not really matter because there is not that amount of grain in the kingdom, and we could not grow it in a lifetime."

The King was dumbfounded and did not know what to say. But when he looked at the scholar's smiling face, he began to understand.

"Tell me," said the perplexed King. "Why did you gamble your head on a doubtful victory."

"But it was not doubtful, sire," replied the scholar. "Because when I named the prize, you said I was a fool to ask for such a pittance. That showed you to be impetuous, and impetuous people are inclined to make rash moves when they play chess."

"Well you have certainly had a double win," admitted the King. "You won the game, and then I cannot pay the stake. But you have taught me a lesson, for in future there will be no more beheadings. I will play chess for the enjoyment of the game."

Before the scholar left the palace, the King made him accept costly gifts of gold and jewels.

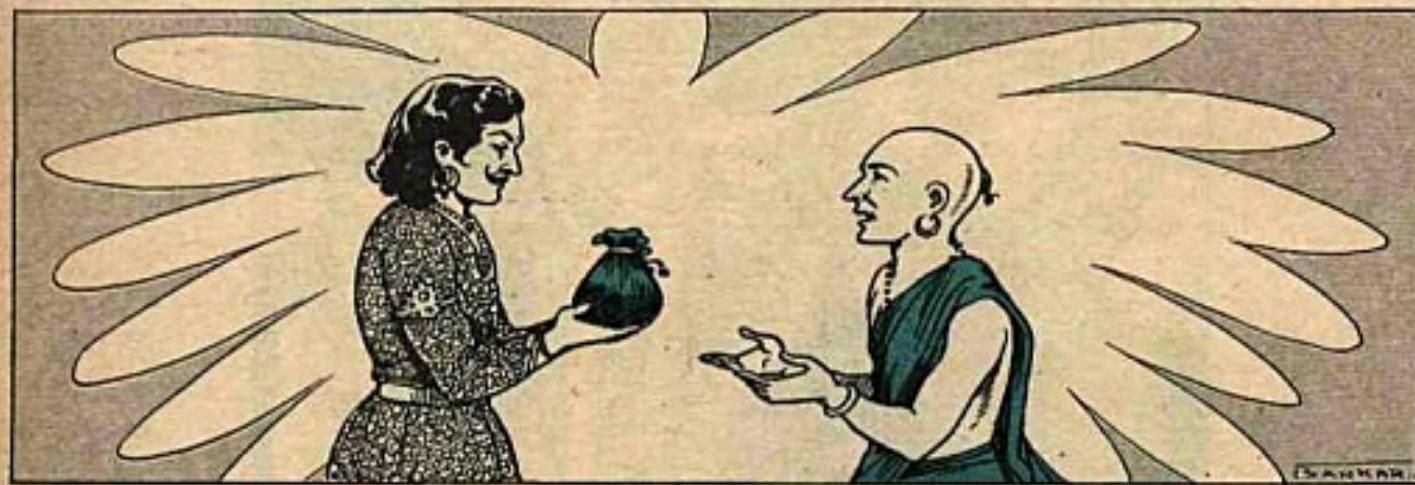


PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

Here's the opportunity for you to win a prize
Winning captions will be featured in the March issue



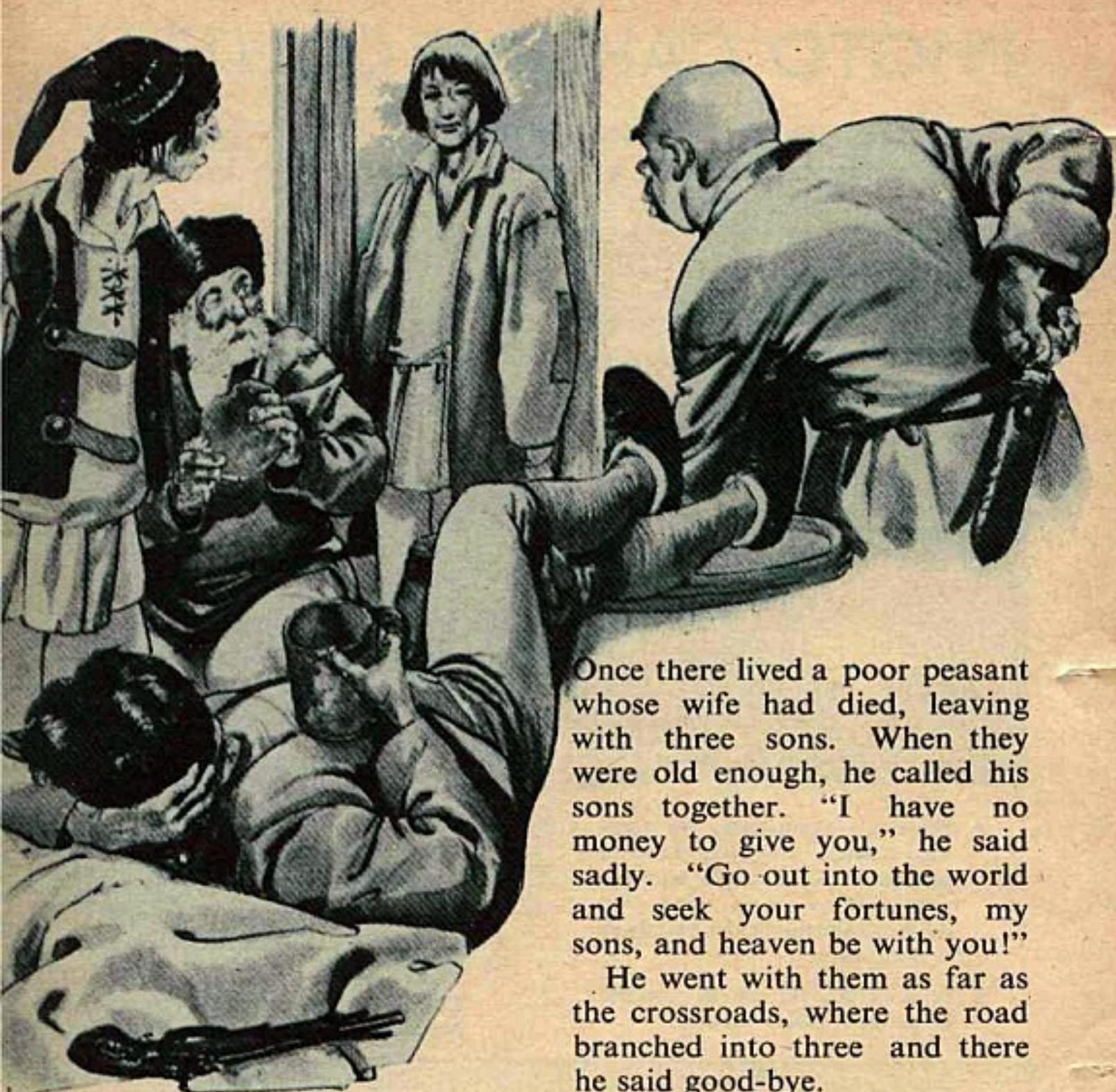
- ★ These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or a dozen words but the two captions should be related to each other.
- ★ Prize of Rs. 20 will be awarded to the best double caption.

- ★ Entries must be received before 31st January, otherwise they cannot be considered.
- ★ Your entry should be written on a postcard and be addressed to :
**Photo Caption Competition,
Chandamama Magazine,
Madras-26.**

Result of Photo Caption Contest in November Issue

The prize is awarded to
**Raghuvir S. Zambaulikar,
Aquem, Margao (Goa).**

Winning entry — 'Sweet Resistance' — 'Timely Assistance'



**"Do you want a servant?"
the young man asked.**

Once there lived a poor peasant whose wife had died, leaving with three sons. When they were old enough, he called his sons together. "I have no money to give you," he said sadly. "Go out into the world and seek your fortunes, my sons, and heaven be with you!"

He went with them as far as the crossroads, where the road branched into three and there he said good-bye.

The youngest son took the road to the right. He walked all day and by the time evening came he found himself in a dark forest. Soon, there was a terrible storm.

THE YOUNG ROBBER CHIEF

Seeing a light shining nearby, he made his way to it and found a small house.

He went inside and saw an old woman standing before a blazing fire.

"I am seeking shelter from this terrible storm," said the lad. "May I stay here for the night?"

"It will be a bad night's work for you if you do," replied the old woman. "Go while there is time, for this house is owned by a band of robbers."

"Oh, that doesn't matter," replied the youth. "If that is all, I will stay here for the night."

Before long they heard the sound of the robbers returning and while they ate, the old woman told them how the lad had come asking for shelter. "Has he any money?" asked one of the robbers at once.

"No, and his clothes are in rags," said the old woman.

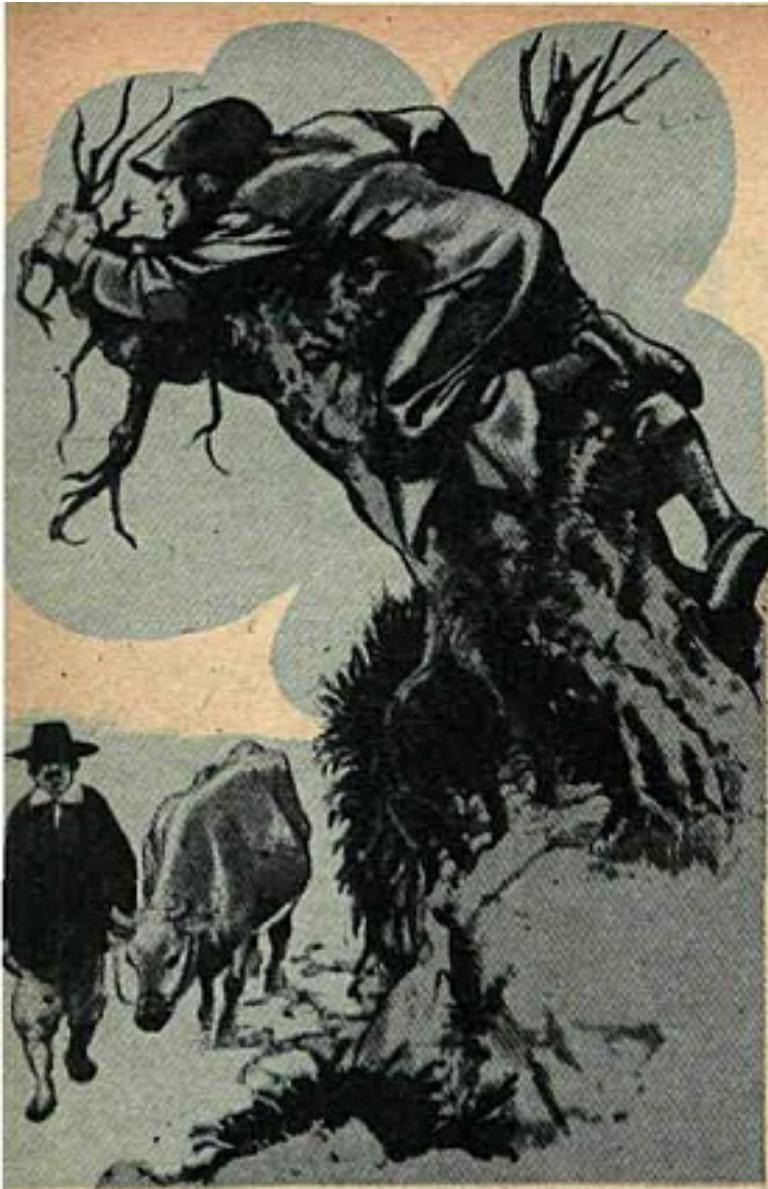
"He is only a poor peasant lad."

"What are we going to do with him then?" asked another. "Should we let him go, now he knows our hideout?"

At that, the young man entered the room. "Do you want a servant?" he asked. "My name is Hans and I am willing to work hard, if you let me stay."

The robber chief looked him up and down. "Stay then, we accept your offer," he said. "However, we must know that you accept our profession. Not far from here lives a peasant who owns three oxen. Tomorrow at dawn, he is taking one of them to market to sell. If you succeed in stealing the ox without harming the man, you may become our servant."

Next morning at dawn the young man went out into the forest. He took with him



a shoe belonging to the old woman, which had on it a shining gold buckle.

He placed it beside the road and then sat and waited. Soon the peasant came past, leading his ox. He stopped when he saw the shoe and went to have a closer look.

"What a fine shoe," he said. "If only there were two, I would take them home to my wife. It might stop her nagging for a bit." Shaking his head sadly, he went on his way.

As soon as he had gone, Hans picked up the shoe, ran through the trees and placed it at the side of the road a little farther on.

When the peasant saw it he was delighted. "Here is the other shoe," he said. "I will go back and fetch the first one and take them home to my wife." He tied his ox to a tree and went back, but hard as he searched, he could not find the other shoe. Worse still, when he returned he found that both ox and shoe had gone.

The poor peasant went home very quietly so that his nagging wife should not hear him. "I must take the second ox to market and get a good price for it, then she will never know," he said.

The robbers were surprised at Hans' skill. "If you steal the second ox without harming the man, you shall join us instead of being our servant," said the leader.

This time, Hans left the cottage and took with him the hilt of a dagger. He lay down beside the road, with the dagger hilt sticking out of his coat and pretended to be dead.

When the peasant passed, leading his second ox, he

shook his head sadly. "Poor fellow, he must have been murdered by brigands," he said.

As soon as he had gone, Hans leaped up, ran through the trees and lay down again at the side of the road, pretending to be dead. The peasant saw him and exclaimed, "How terrible, another one."

A third time the young man rushed through the trees and lay down at the side of the road. When the peasant came past, he could not believe his eyes. "I must be dreaming," he said. "I will just go back and make sure." With that he tied his ox to a tree and went back along the road and Hans quickly jumped up, untied it and led it away.

The robbers were amazed. "If you steal the third ox, we will make you our chief," they said.

Next day, Hans went out and hid in the wood. When the peasant came by with the third ox, Hans began to bellow softly. The peasant stopped and listened. "That is the sound of an ox," he said. "My others must have broken loose and are wandering in the forest." He tied the third ox to a tree and went in search of them and

in a flash Hans had untied it and led it away.

Hans was made the robber chief and, as they did not want the oxen, they turned them loose to return to their stall, much to the peasant's delight.

Next day, when the robbers went out, Hans stayed behind, saying he was tired. Then he dressed himself in fine clothes and went to see his father.

"Now that I am a robber chief," he said, "go to the judge, our neighbour, and tell him that I wish to marry his daughter."

With many misgivings the old man did so and the judge roared with laughter. "If this robber chief can steal the joint of meat from my oven tomorrow, he can become my son-in-law," he replied.

Next day, the young man dressed as a beggar and went to the judge's house. He took with him a sack in which he had three hares.

He stood outside the house, begging for alms. Everyone was in the kitchen, guarding the joint, but the kitchen boy threw some coins out of the window.

Hans went and hid behind the garden wall. Then he

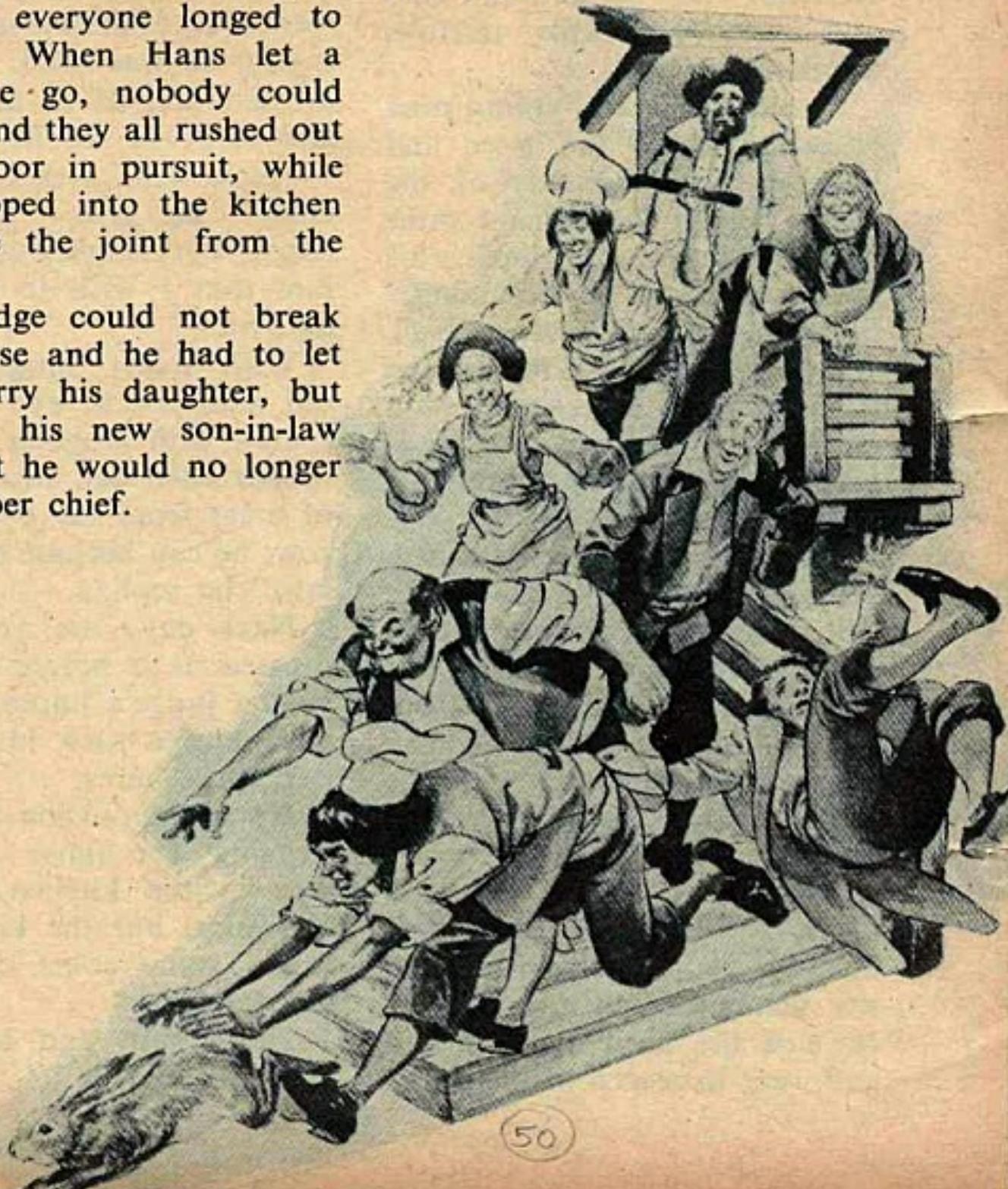
pulled a hare from his sack and let it run into the garden. Everyone in the kitchen saw it and the judge, who was very fond of jugged hare, said, "What a pity we cannot catch it."

After a time Hans let a second hare run into the garden and everyone longed to catch it. When Hans let a third hare go, nobody could resist it and they all rushed out of the door in pursuit, while Hans slipped into the kitchen and stole the joint from the oven.

The judge could not break his promise and he had to let Hans marry his daughter, but he made his new son-in-law agree that he would no longer be a robber chief.

"I only became a brigand for fun in the first place," said Hans. "Now I shall be more than content to do an honest day's work for my living."

He did so and he and his wife lived happily together for many years.





Stories from MAHABHARATA

The story so far:

The Kaurava princes, the sons of the blind king Dhritarashtra, conspired with their evil counsellors to kill the Pandava princes, and their mother the Queen Kunti.

The Pandava princes were induced with their mother to visit the distant town of Varanasi, where a house had been built for their residence, built of the most inflammable materials. But with the help of Vidura, the wise counsellor, the five brothers and their mother escaped the conflagration through a subterranean passage, and took refuge in the forests,

living as brahmans.

They live for a time in the town of Ekachakrapura, and whilst there, Bhima, a stalwart fighter, rids the town of an evil man-eating rakshasa giant.

The Swayamvara of Princess Draupadi.

While the Pandavas were living as brahmans at Eka-chakrapura, they heard of the approaching celebration of the marriage of the Princess Draupadi, daughter of the Drupada, King of Panchala. All the monarchs and princesses of Northern India were invited, and in accordance with the



Dhrishtadyumna introduces his sister, Princess Draupadi.

ancient Swayamvara custom, the bride would choose her husband from among the assembled royalty.

It will be remembered that King Drupada had a bitter hatred of Drona, the great brahman warrior, yet he sent his son, Dhrishtadyumna to Drona, to learn the arts of warfare.

Many brahmans of Eka-chakrapura planned to go to Panchala in the hope of receiving the customary gifts and to see the festivities and pageant of a royal wedding.

Kunti, with her motherly instinct, recognized her sons

desire to go to Panchala, so she told them, "We have been in this city too long and it is time to think of going somewhere else. The alms doled out to us are getting less and less, so let us go to Drupada's kingdom, which is said to be fair and prosperous."

So the Pandavas, still in the guise of brahmans, set off on the long journey to the kingdom of Panchala. Often they walked far into the night, with Arjuna and a burning torch leading the way.

At last they arrived at Panchala, and found shelter in a potter's hut. The city was thronged with visitors, from the poorest peasants who came to enjoy the public entertainments, to the rich and courtly princes who hoped to win the hand of the princess.

King Drupada had always longed for Arjuna to marry his daughter, and when he heard the news of the death of the Pandavas in the fire at Varanasi, he was plunged in sorrow, but was relieved by a later rumour that they had managed to escape.

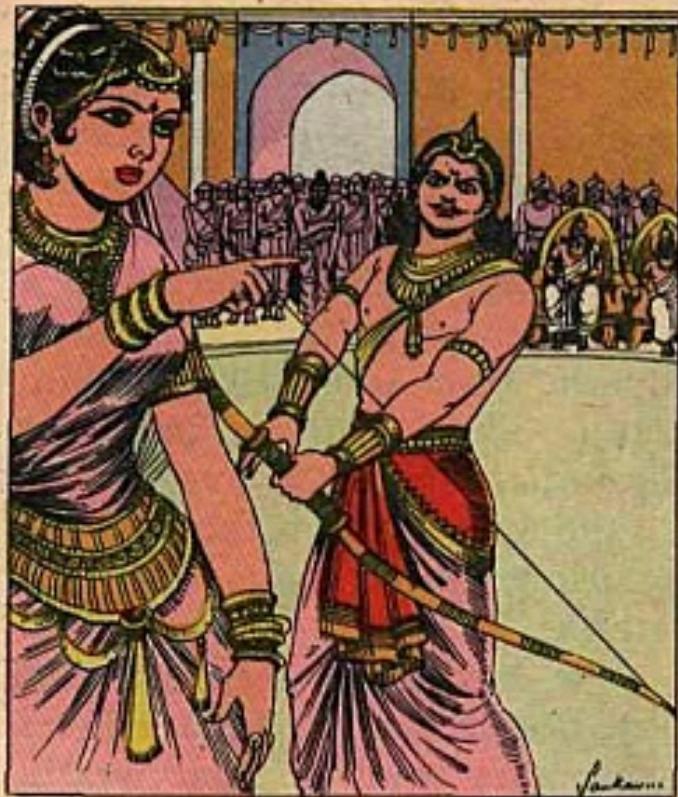
Still with his mind on Arjuna, King Drupada set a mighty task for anyone to win the hand of

his daughter. A mighty steel bow was placed in the marriage hall. The suitors had to string the bow and then shoot five steel arrows, through the central aperture of a whirling disc, and well beyond this whirling disc, was the target which each of the five arrows had to strike.

Then came the day of the ceremony. The marriage hall was beautifully decorated, and it seemed that all the rulers of Northern India were there. The sons of King Dhritarashtra accompanied by Karna were well to the fore, and there too, was Krishna seated beside his elder brother, Balaram.

To the sound of one hundred trumpets, Princess Draupadi entered the hall, accompanied by her brother Dhrishtadyumna. She coyly glanced at the valiant princes, who on their part looked at her in open admiration.

After the brahmans had repeated the usual mantras, and the peace invocation had been chanted, Dhrishtadyumna took Draupadi by the hand and led her to the centre of the hall. Then he proclaimed. "Mark this bow, assembled monarchs, and the target, He who sends five arrows in succession through



Draupadi treats Karna with scorn.

the hole in the disc, and unerringly hits the target, and if he be of noble lineage, shall win the hand of my sister."

Prince after Prince came forward and tried in vain to string the bow. Now it was the turn of Karna, who strung the bow with surprising ease, but before he could fire an arrow, Draupadi proudly exclaimed "As the daughter of a monarch, I will not wed the son of a groom."

Karna, his head bent in shame, slowly walked back to his seat. At this there was considerable angry shouting, some saying that it was an

impossible test put up to shame the royal guests. Then all the noise stopped, for from among the group of brahmans, a youth advanced towards the bow.

It was Arjuna, and with a silent prayer to the Gods, took up the bow and strung it with ease. Then, without pause or hesitation, he shot five arrows in quick succession through the whirling disc right into the target.

The brahmans shouted with joy, not so many of the princes who were loud in their wrath, shouting, "If the Princess Draupadi does not care to marry a prince, she certainly shall not marry this prating priest."

At this one of the princes started to draw his sword, but Bhima was already at Arjuna's side, ready to fight one and all.

Then Sri Krishna, who not

deceived by the brahman robes, had realised that the Pandava princes were involved. He strode amidst the irate suitors, and his calm voice and righteous words calmed the angry monarchs.

Meanwhile the Pandava princes accompanied by Draupadi, hurried back to the potter's hut to tell Kunti their mother, of the good fortune that had been theirs that day.

When they got to the hut, they left Draupadi outside in order to surprise their mother. On going inside in great glee, they told their mother they had received a great gift.

"Enjoy ye the gift in common," replied their mother, not knowing what it was. And as a mother's command cannot be disregarded, Draupadi became the common wife of the five brothers.





THE MAGIC CLOTH

There once lived a rich merchant, bad tempered and mean, with never a kind word for anyone. Unfortunately his wife was no better. Perhaps if they had been blessed with children, they would have had a more friendly attitude.

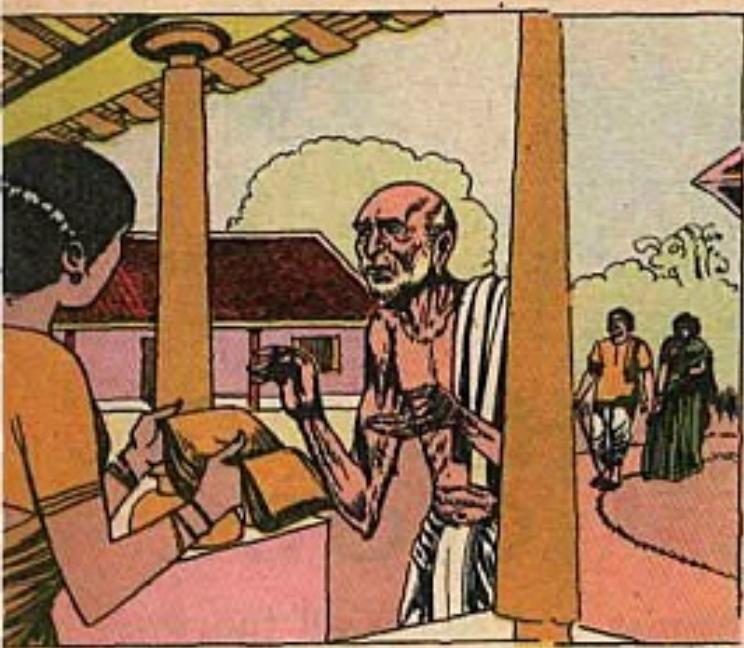
Naturally, they had no friends, and no one would ever dream of asking them a favour. If ever a needy person came begging at their door, the wife would shout at the poor beggar in no uncertain terms, and if he didn't go away fast enough, she would pick up a stick and chase him out of the compound.

There was one poor girl, named Vanita, who had to bear the brunt of their bad tempers from morning till night. She was their only servant whom they had obtained from an orphanage, which saved money.

Vanita had to do all the work in the house, cleaning, cooking, washing, and if ever in her tiredness she sat down to rest her weary body, they would scold her and call her rather horrible names.

At night poor Vanita would crawl into bed, and could not control the tears as she pondered on the hopelessness of her life. O! if only I was beautiful, or even just attractive, she would sadly dream then some young man might take pity and marry me. But this was just a dream, because unfortunately she was plain as plain could be.

Then one day, when the master and mistress happened to be out, and Vanita was busy cooking the dinner, she heard a feeble voice calling to her from the kitchen door.



When she opened the door, there stood a very old man, dressed in rags and partially blind. "Good woman," he whimpered, "I am dying of hunger. Please spare me something to eat."

How Vanita longed to help the beggar. But she dare not give him any food from the house, for that would bring down the wrath of her employers if they found out. Then she remembered, that she did have some food that belonged to her, and this was about a pound of unhusked rice, which she had painstakingly collected over the months, out of the straw she used for lighting the fire.

Asking the beggar to sit down, Vanita quickly cleaned her store of rice, and cooked it

on the fire. When she put the bowl of rice in front of the beggar, his face lit up with a grateful smile, and fumbling in his pocket, he brought out a piece of cloth, which he offered to Vanita. "Whenever you wash, dry yourself with this cloth and fortune will come your way."

As luck would have it, before the old beggar had finished eating the rice, the master and mistress walked into the kitchen.

"What is this dirty beggar doing in the house?" screamed the woman. "And eating our food."

"It is not your food," pluckily replied Vanita.

"Do not lie to me," shouted the woman, and made a grab at the bowl the old beggar was eating from. But before their very eyes, the old man and the bowl disappeared.

This made the master and mistress angrier than ever, to think an old beggar could vanish without trace, and before Vanita could explain anything, they shouted and beat her, then sent her to bed without any food.

From that day onwards, whenever Vanita washed, she

dried herself with the cloth the beggar had given her. And day by day, her features gradually changed to radiant beauty.

Such a transformation did not escape the notice of her employers, and their curiosity was certainly aroused when Vanita refused to answer their many questions. In the end, they lost their tempers and beat the poor girl until she was forced to tell them about the beggar and the magic cloth.

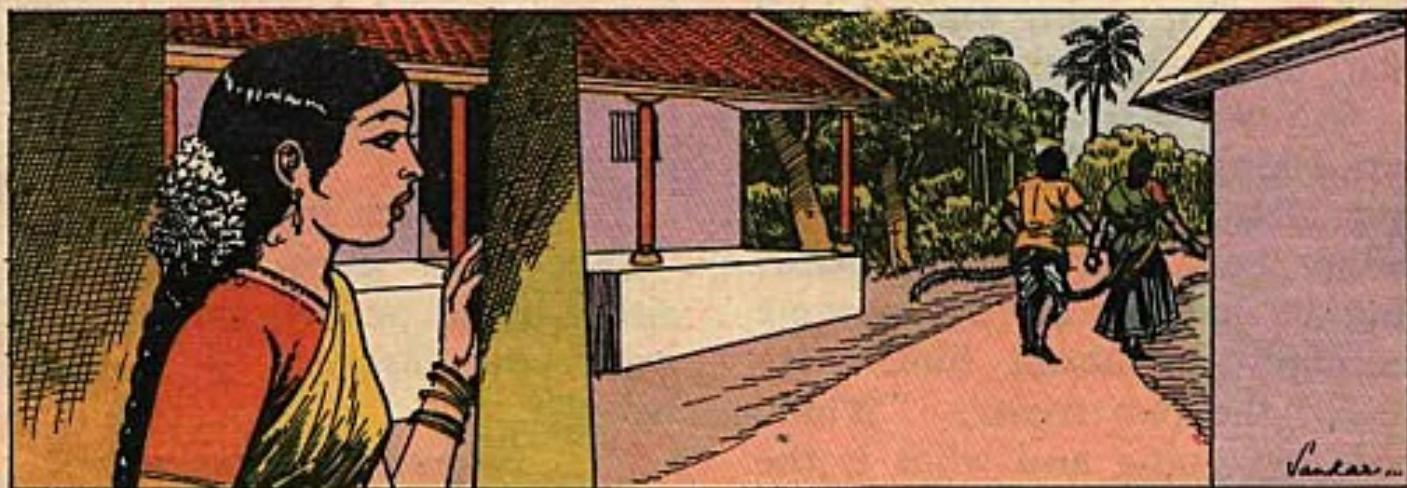
The merchant and his wife, made Vanita give them the cloth, then like conspirators they sat up half through the night building castles in the air. First they would use the cloth, until they were both young and beautiful. Then they would hire out the cloth at fantastic prices and make a large fortune.

So next morning, they were

up before dawn and having bathed, rubbed each other vigorously with the cloth, then rushed to the mirror to gloat over their coming beauty. But to their horror, they saw that they had been changed into monkeys!

Now, sadder but wiser, they realised no one would ever believe their story, and the only thing to do was to leave the house and their possessions to Vanita, and steal away into the nearby hills and live like hermits.

Not long afterwards, the now beautiful Vanita married, and in her new and happy life, Vanita always looked after the poor and needy. She never forgot the old beggar who had taught her and her old employers that, in giving, one finds happiness, and unkindness to others never pays.





Faith pays rewards

Two friends who lived in the same village were also companions in misfortune. This predicament had come about because both of them had gone through their inheritances through sheer idleness and folly. When they found that they had nothing to eat, they decided to go to the neighbouring kingdom and to ask help of the King. King Mahendra's generosity and kindness to those in need was a well-known fact, in his own realm and in all the neighbouring states.

On their way to King Mahendra's kingdom they met a stranger. He did not appear to be either very rich or very poor; but he had an air of supreme contentment about him. He asked the two friends, "Where are you going and what is the

purpose of your journey?"

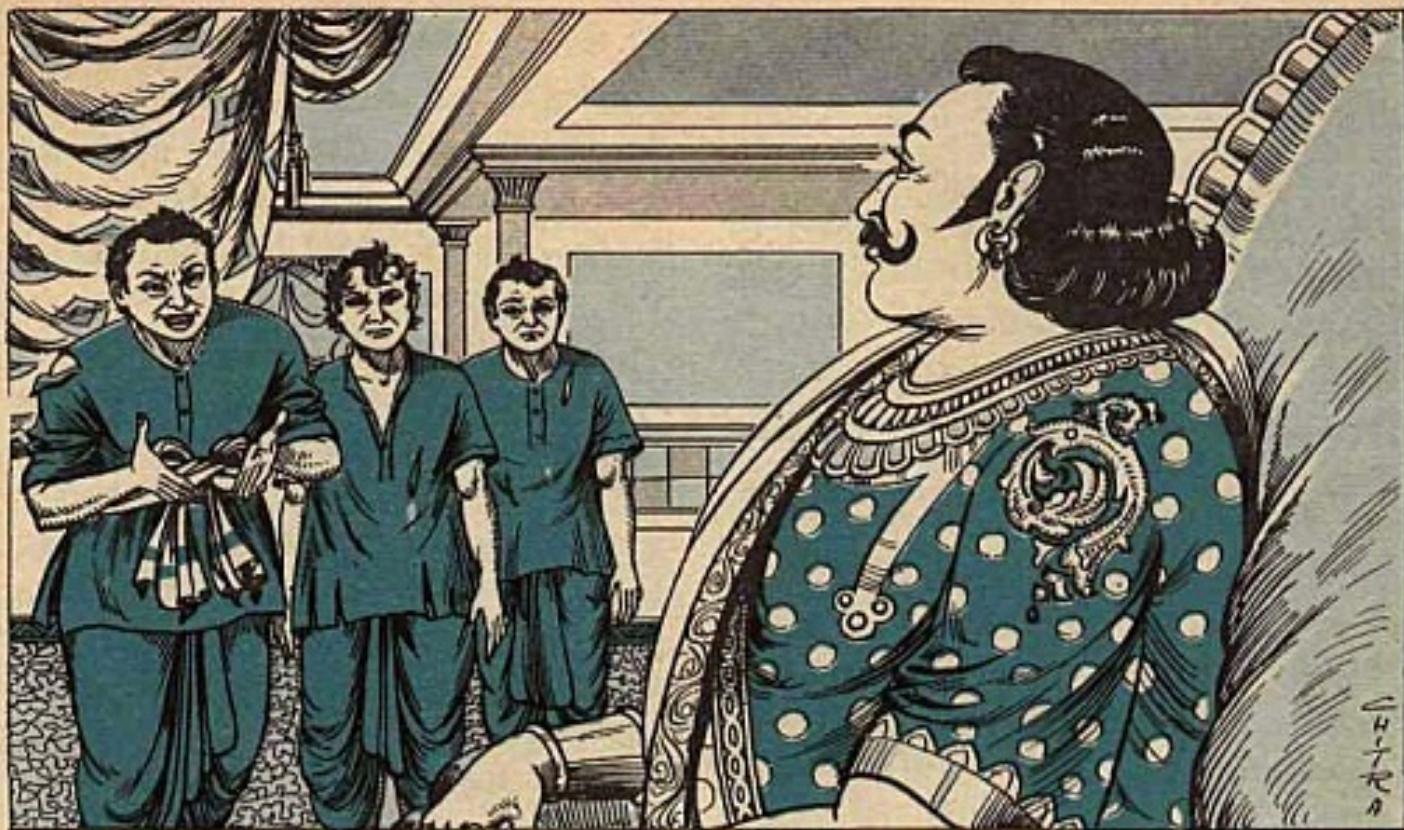
One of the friends replied, "Good Sir, we have been unlucky in business and have become bankrupt. So we are going to see King Mahendra, who as you know is a very generous man, to ask him to help us to start life anew."

"Where are you going?" the friends asked the stranger.

"Nowhere in particular," answered the stranger. "Forgive me for saying this, but I hate to receive help from any other human being. I only seek God's help, when I really need it."

To which the friends replied, "Since God does not have either hands or feet, can he not help you through a human being?"

"I believe wholeheartedly



in God and he has never failed me, less" claimed the stranger.

After a long and tedious journey the three men arrived at King Mahendra's capital. Since it was becoming dark they found a rest-house in which to spend the night.

Now King Mahendra was in the habit of walking through the streets of his capital incognito, observing his subjects and listening to their conversations.

That very same night King Mahendra happened to pass by the rest-house in which the three men were staying and hearing them having a heated discussion, he stopped to listen.

When they retired for the night the King went his way, after noting the number of the room they occupied and the whereabouts of the rest-house.

Next morning the King sent for the three strangers and asked them, "Why have you come to my kingdom and what is it that you need?"

One of the two friends replied, "Your Majesty, I was born rich, but because I was foolish, I soon ran through my inheritance. Had I worked, I would not have been in this sad plight today. If your Highness can spare me ten thousand pieces of gold, I know that I will be able to

make good with it and regain my former position."

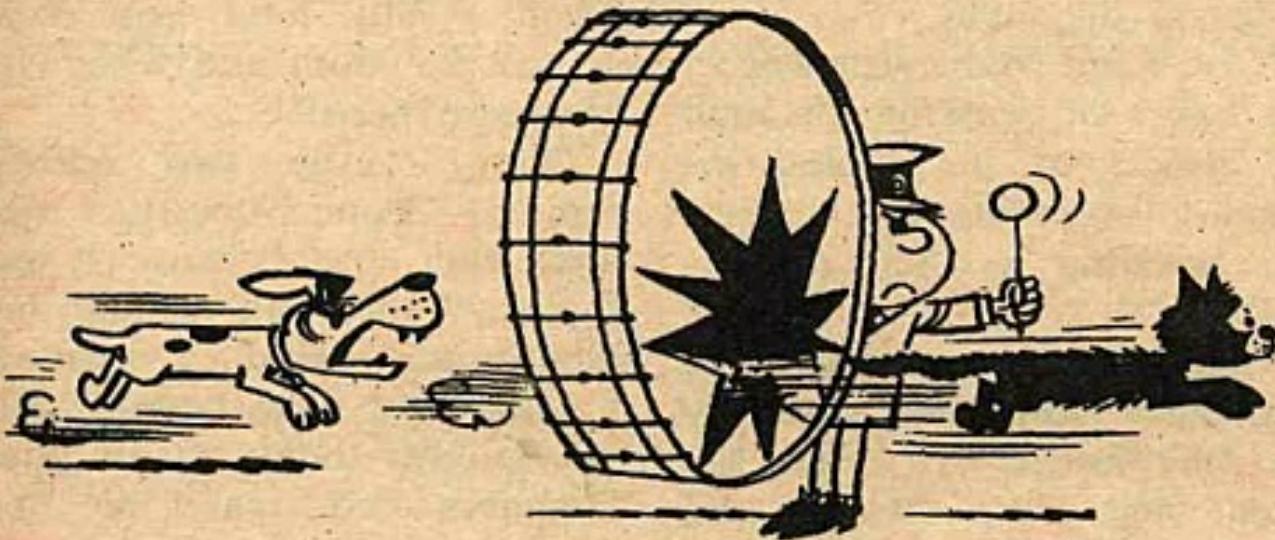
The other friend said, "At one time I was the luckiest man alive because not only did I inherit a vast sum of money but I also had the most beautiful wife. Unfortunately my beloved wife fell ill and died. After she died, I never bothered to work and soon my inheritance dwindled away. Now I am a hopeless wanderer. If your Majesty can find another beautiful wife for me and also give me enough money to buy a farm, I am sure that I will soon become prosperous again."

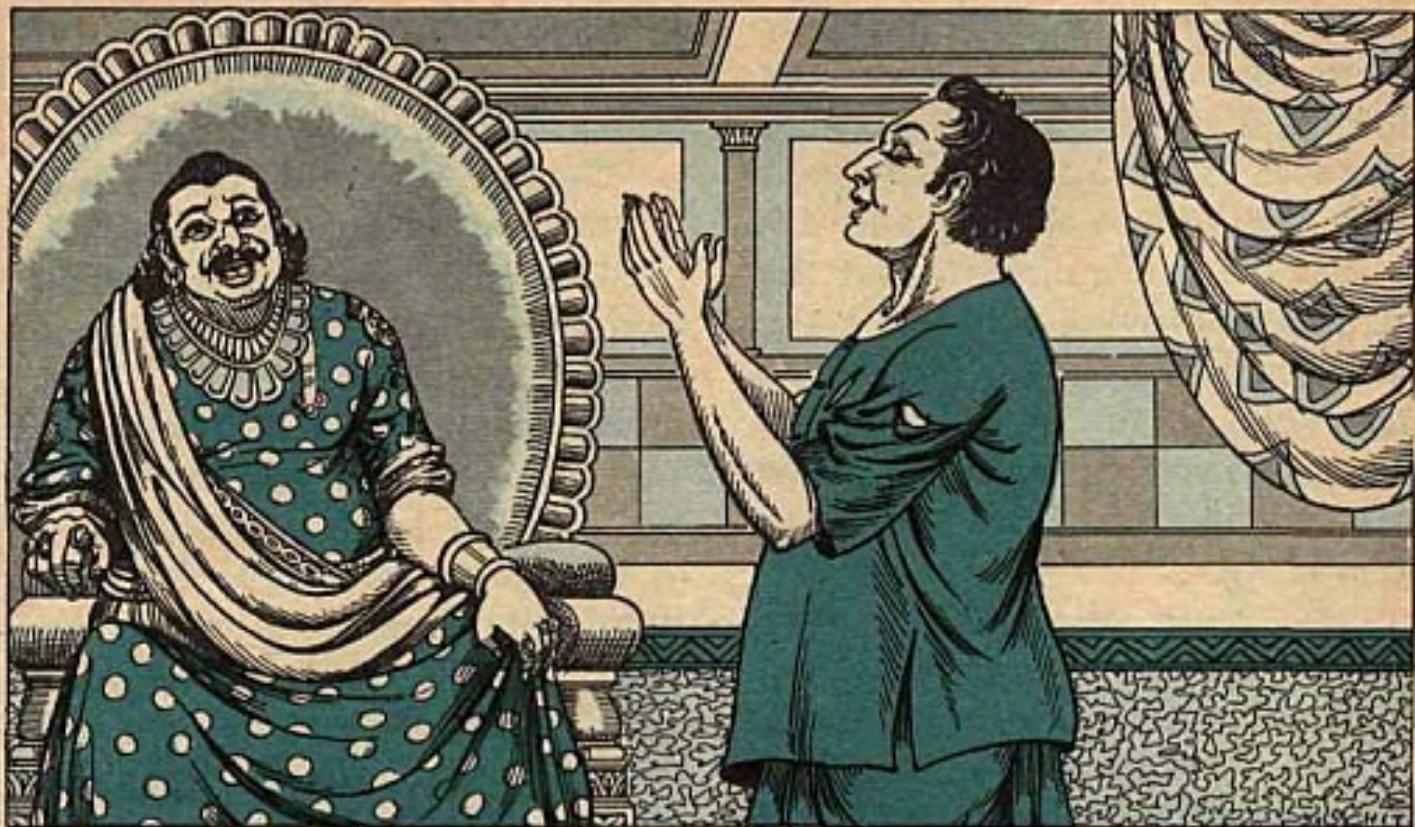
"What do you want from me?" the King asked the other man.

"Your Majesty," he replied, "I have no desire or need for anything. By the grace of God, I am able to manage from day to day and I bless the Almighty, for being so kind to me."

The King thought to himself—'Here is an arrogant fellow! How dare he defy me by saying he can do without my gifts'. Outwardly calm, though inwardly raging the King said in an imperious voice, "You two will be given all that you have asked for." Then turning to the other man he said, "And you—you will go away empty-handed, through no fault of mine."

As soon as the three strangers had left his palace, the King summoned two of his body-guards. "On the road





leading out of my capital you will find three strangers. One of them will be carrying two bags filled with gold coins. Another has one bag of gold coins and is accompanied by a beautiful woman. The third man is empty-handed. Cut off his head and bring it to me."

In the meantime, the man who had the two bags of gold coins soon became tired, because it was a very hot day. So he asked the man who had nothing to carry, to take the bags from him and to continue on his way, whilst he rested under the shade of a big tree beside the road, for a little while.

The King's guards found the stranger resting under the tree with nothing whatsoever in his possession. Thinking he was the right man the guards cut off his head and hurried with it to the King.

The King was surprised when he saw the wrong man's head and ordered his men to go back and find the stranger who was not accompanied by a beautiful woman and to decapitate him.

Now the man who had been given the beautiful lady was feeling very hot and tired too. When they came to a pond of lovely crystal clear water he could not resist the temptation

of bathing in it. Telling his companions not to wait for him and that he would catch up with them later, he jumped into the water, clothes and all.

The King's guards found the stranger enjoying himself in the pond and thinking him to be the right man, as he had no beautiful woman with him, they cut off his head and took it to the King.

The King was aghast when he saw that once again they had brought the wrong man's head. He decided to go and find out for himself how two such tragedies had happened. Jumping on to his fastest stallion he set off down the highway at full speed.

It was not long before he caught up with the last stranger, who was struggling along the road, almost bent in two, with the weight of the three bags of

gold coins. The beautiful woman was walking at a respectable distance behind him.

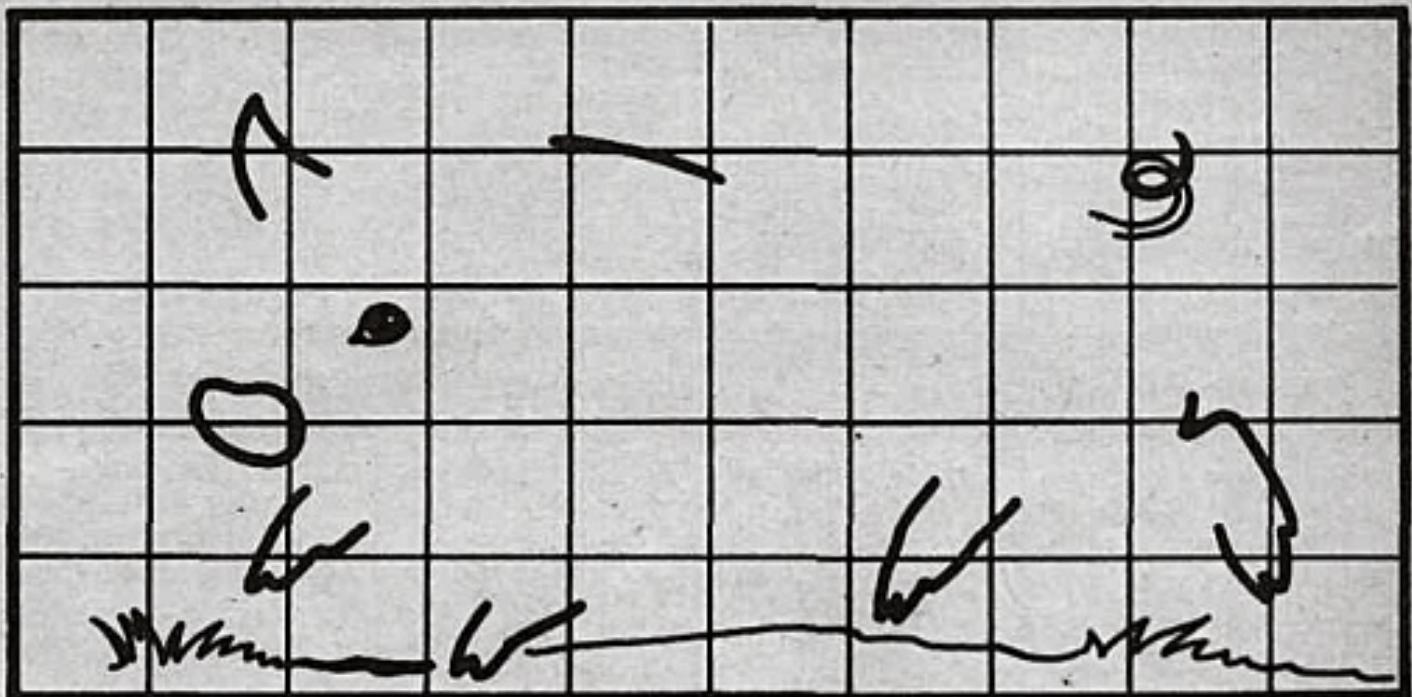
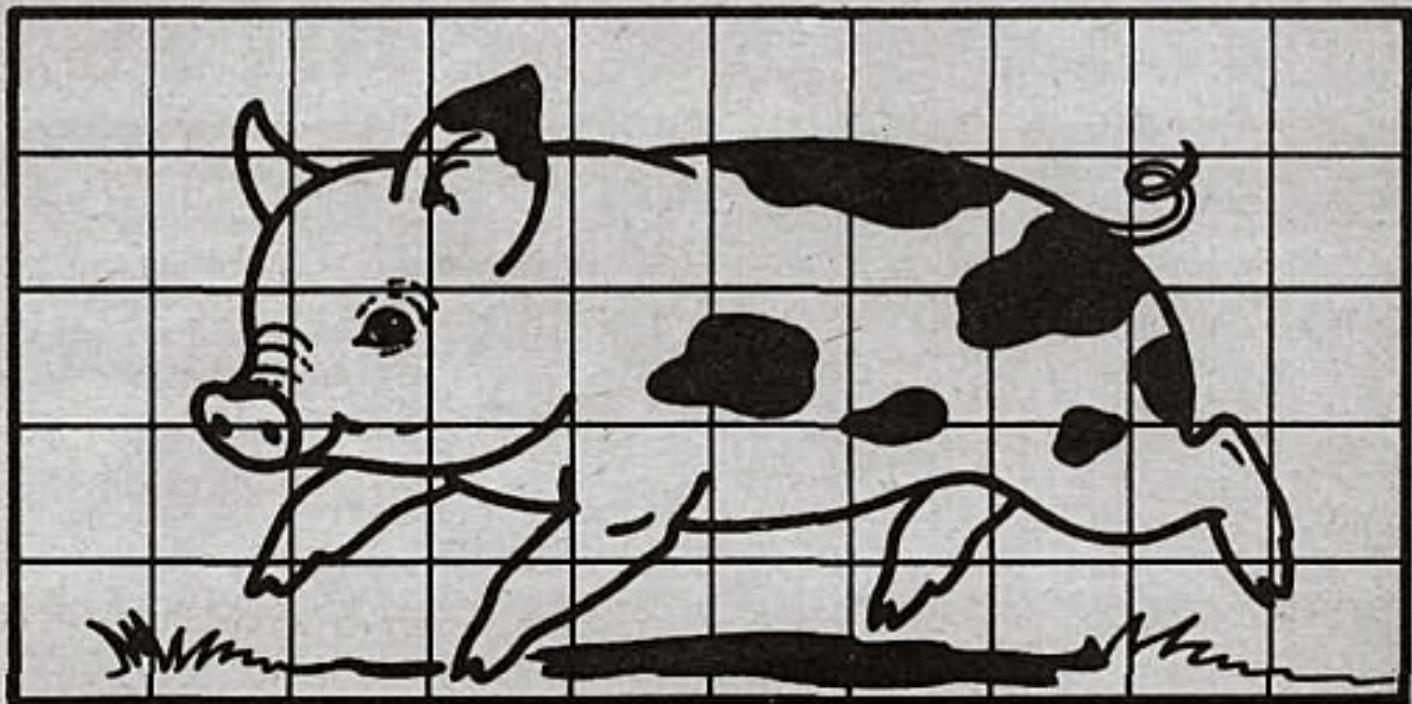
"Stop!" shouted the King, "Where are your two friends?"

"One of them is taking a rest and the other one is having a swim," replied the man. "They asked us not to wait for them, saying that they would catch up with us later on."

The King realized that the hand of God had played a part in this strange turn of events and felt very sorry for what he had done. He explained all that had happened and the reason for it, to the stranger. And he asked him to keep the beautiful woman and the three bags of gold for his very own.

The stranger accepted the gifts as the will of God and after thanking the King, he continued on his way.





See how well you can copy this drawing of a jolly pig. Our artist has already drawn some of it to give you a start and the squares are there as a guide.

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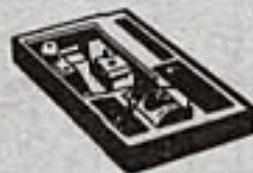
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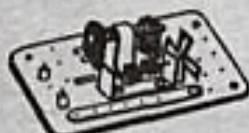
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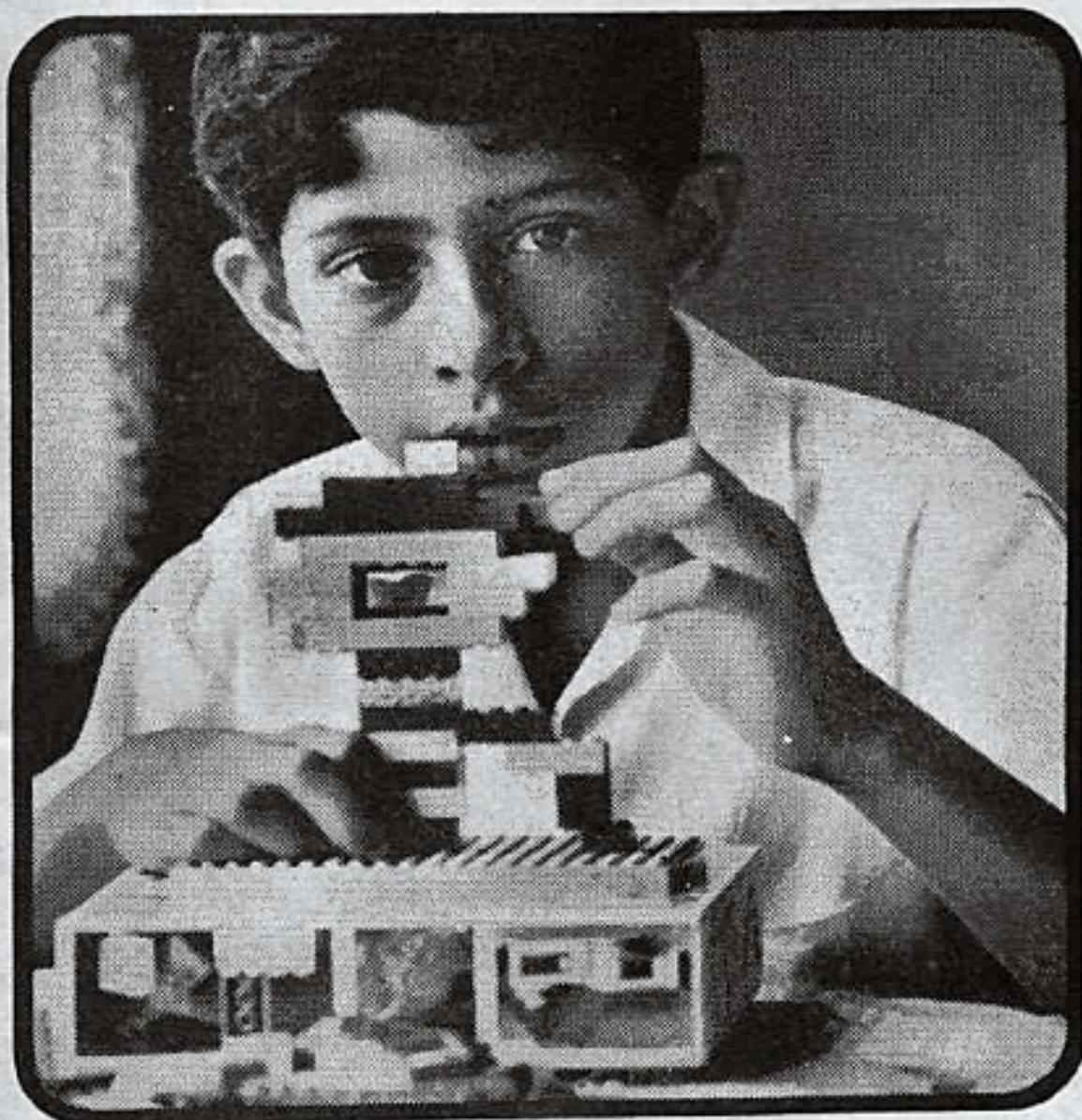
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